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AWAY FROM HOME.

BY EREN E. REXFORD.

I sit in the gathering twilight,
And hear in the street below,
Strange voices, and hurrying footsteps,
But never a one I know.
Here, in this great, wide city,
A stranger, I sit apart,
As lonely as if I dwelt
In the desert's dreary heart.
But the din dies out of the twilight,
And my thoughts, like birds, fly home,
Where father sits by the firelight,
With thoughts of the ones who roam.
I can see the red light playing
Strange freaks with his silver hair,
As he whispers the dear names over
In a way that is half a prayer.
He is sitting there with his Bible
Open upon his knee,
And I know that the sweet old chapters
Are blent with his thoughts of me.
Oh, thought that is sweet as Heaven,
Wherever my feet may roam,
There is one true heart to love me,
And pray for me at home.
I know what he sees in the firelight,
By his strange and far-off look,
As he thinks the promises over
He has read in the dear old Book.
Close by the gates of Heaven
He sees my mother stand,
And to him, in the flash of the firelight,
She waves a beckoning hand.
Oh, tenderest heart, and truest,
Your thoughts are in Heaven and here,
Of the friends in the two worlds, father,
The heaven-friends are most near.
And he prays that when life is ended,
And no more our footsteps roam,
In the world that is over yonder
He may have us all at home.
The miles may be long between us,
But he they may not be,
Your love will reach over all distance,
And help me to be true.
And the thought will be sweet with comfort,
Wherever my feet may roam,
That there's one true heart to love me,
And pray for him at home.

The Red Cross;

OR,

The Mystery of Warren-Guilerland.

A ROMANCE OF THE ACCURSED COINS.

BY GRACE MORTIMER

CHAPTER X.

THE KERCHEVALS.

THREE months have passed since we dropped the curtain upon the wild scene of Cordelia Valrose's capture by the Arab emir, at Wady Zebid.
We lift the curtain, this sweet October evening, upon a weirdly dissimilar scene.
It is a place called the Death Gulch, in Wisconsin, and by right of the mysterious deed done there, which presently turned a myriad eyes upon the obscure spot, otherwise never heard of, it deserves a conspicuous description.
The Death Gulch is a valley with a worn-out silver mine in it; there is also a lake in it, walled in on every side by a grim facade of rocks, except at one end, where a single wooden house then stood, surrounded by a frown attempt at a farm.
This lake—I have scarcely language to present it to my readers' imaginations, such a combination of horrors was it—was certainly a curious freak of Nature's. It was a sheet of black, motionless, currentless, dead water, thickened with green slime, and teeming with the most monstrous forms of vegetation. The acme of submarine hideousness wriggled and swarmed and seethed in its rank-smelling depths, as if Nature herself hid them deep, ashamed of their foulness. It was encircled by a rampart of bare cliffs, the faces of which were horribly stained and smeared, and blotched with red, green, and black mould, or, possibly, by the various oxides in the stone, suggesting to the startled stranger sickening ideas of massacre and violence.
At the feet of these cliffs ran a strip of rank black mud, a species of soil not to be met elsewhere in all the Western States, and looked upon by all the neighboring farmers as something supernatural therefore. Out of this alien hot-bed a mass of vegetation as foreign sprung up every season in riotous profusion—great crawling, serpent-like vines, which, produced mammoth clusters of watery, viscid poison grapes, trees that distorted themselves into abnormal growths, all slimy with ooze and swathed with unwholesome fungus, vast flaring flowers that diffused overpowering odors, and, wriggling continually in and out of the dank moss, innumerable little black snakes, with a white ring around their necks, spread the terror of the dreary place wherever its name was uttered.
The very air was heavy with malaria, the very sky above it was ever sad and unbearably, never clear, never blue, but always blurred by clammy, discolored vapors. It seemed to be the haunt and home of all the diseases, the misfortunes, and the crimes that ever originated in Wisconsin, or so the gossips were wont to say.
At the extremity of the lake—which was four or five miles in length, and two broad—stood the solitary house before mentioned.
It was a wooden erection, of age far past its prime; it was blackened by the snows and fogs of the passing years; its planks were visibly rotting away, and it was forward, as if it would fall before the first healthy storm-blast which stirred the stagnant atmosphere—a delirious, stood year by year, only sinking a little deeper into the ooze which was imperceptibly sucking it down.
A ruined barn flanked the house. The midnight wind had a habit of moaning through its weather-beaten clapboards and crumbling key-holes, like the wail of a woman in mortal grief or pain—much to the discomfort of everybody possessed of a speck of reverence. (I quote from the gossips.) A few, a very few acres of arable land stretched behind the buildings into the valley, a dark, water-logged plain, where the fruits of the field either burst into rank-flavored and monster growths, or rotted in the seed in the spongy soil, just as it chanced. The



"Look out, you wicked hearts. I'll defend my poor helpless father's honor with every breath I draw."

nearest town was ten miles distant, and only to be reached by the farmer's rickety, one-horse buggy crawling through a wilderness of muskeeto-infested shrubbery up to the hubs in seething black mud. In fact, had the most ascetic of all the beauty, comfort, and happiness-luring recluses searched the world over, he could not have discovered a spot more desolate, and, as it would seem, more God-forgotten, than this Death Gulch.
Ten years ago a man had come with his family from Virginia, and had settled there. It was a madman's act, done in a fit of despair, and vainly repented ever since.
He had been a gentleman of fashion and means, had suffered reverses, had succumbed to adversity, and had perfected the ruin by paring with his last dollar in exchange for this luckless farm in the Death Gulch, tempted by its cheapness, and buoyed up by his utter ignorance of agriculture.
He had a wife, two daughters, and a son, and his name was—
JONAS KERCHEVAL.
It was about five o'clock of the evening, and Anne, the eldest daughter, a dark-faced gypsy of twenty-one, was washing the supper-dishes, while her mother sat by the wide hearth, busily knitting those coarse woolen socks, which the farmers of the West are wont to wear during their rigor of winter. Josie, the next child, a flaxen-haired fairy of seventeen, was engaged in fluttering about the bare, but scrupulously neat room, now twisting a fold of the coarse window curtain into a more graceful position, now stopping at the canary's cage to whistle up the drowsy songster, and anon flitting to the little mirror, that hung between the windows, to twine her glossy ringlets round her pretty fingers, or to prink her azure ribbons more coquettishly at her creamy tresses.
The only boy, Edwin, or rather Ned, a wild, harum-scarum noble-de-hoy of fifteen, had flung himself on the floor by the fire, and with his brown face gradually turning lobster-red under the heat to which he was subjecting it, and his horny hands buried in the rough hair of an immense bull-dog which sprawled at his side, he seemed to sleep.
Jonas Kercheval sat at the table, his elbows resting on it, his head supported on his spread hands, and his eyes fixed on vacancy.
He was pale and haggard; his eyes had sunk into two caverns, from which they looked out with an expression of patient endurance and helpless suffering that was utterly pitiable; his chest was hollow, and his jet-black hair was thickly sprinkled with white already, though his age was scarcely fifty yet.
A profound sigh escaped him, and he passed his thin hands slowly over his pallid face. Anne glanced at the bowed head with an intense strained look in her rich black eyes, and her scarlet lip quivered, to be instantly bitten into calmness as she rattled away with her dishes.
Josie turned a pirouette and sang:
"My love she is young, she is young, is young,
When she laughs the dimple dips,
We walked in the wind and her long locks blew
Till sweetly they touched my lips.
And I'll out to the freezing mere,
Where the stiff reeds whistle so low,
And I'll tell my mind to the friendly wind,
Because I have loved her so."
Anne's scarlet lips waxed white; her great velvet eyes filled with fire.
But she said never a word.
"My dear," said Mrs. Kercheval to her husband, in a tone of loving remonstrance, "all the thinking in the world will do no good. We must mortgage the farm."
"Ay, mortgage the farm," groaned Kercheval, from behind his clasped hands; "live a few months longer on the pittance it brings, and then—starve!"
"No, dear, oh, no, we shall not be left to starve," said Mrs. Kercheval, throwing a meek glance heavenward. "What is it David says? I have never yet seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging their bread."
"There—that's enough!" cried Kercheval,

starting to his feet as if she had stung him.
"I'm not righteous, that's where it is; I expect no mercy from God, much less his miraculous intervention in my behalf."
"Alas!" said she, looking upon him with infinite pity and tenderness, "neither of us have any right to expect anything from God as our deserts, except condemnation."
"Silence, I command you!" exclaimed he, furiously; "you know nothing about this matter! You deserve condemnation, you say! God! what, then, do I deserve? For twenty years I have insulted my Maker and deceived the world."
"Jonas! my husband!" murmured the devoted wife, rising hastily to put her loving hand on his mouth, for she truly believed that in his misery he did not know what he said. He grasped both her thin white hands, and looked into her worn, grief-wrinkled face in strange agitation.
"Yes," said he, hoarsely, "you've never known the true character of your husband, my poor Margaret; you've always believed me all you would like me to be, and followed my fortunes through thick and thin without a whisper of repining or one sigh of discontent. Margaret, I was never worth it."
"Indeed you were, my own true husband!" exclaimed she, fervently. "Few wives have been loved as I have been—"
"And few have been wronged as you have been!" said he, faintly.
"Oh, don't say so!" pleaded she; "why should you reproach yourself with the misfortunes which Providence has seen fit to send upon us! Surely never man worked so hard, or faced defeat so bravely, or went to work again so perseveringly as you!"
"My poor Margaret!" almost sobbed he. "If you knew—ah! if you only knew me as I know myself, you would curse me to my face and forsake me."
"That I never would," she answered, quietly; and drawing his anguished face down to her shoulder, she caressed the desperate man most tenderly, while she whispered sweet wifely endearments in his ear.
The three children of the ill-fated couple had watched this scene in silence. Anne now spoke, her bold, bright face brilliant with enthusiasm.
"Father and mother," said she, "I'm going to speak up once and for all. It's all nonsense to keep Josie and me at home when we might be earning our bread, and maybe helping you along a bit, too, in some of the neighbors' families. If I've been asked to go to service once, I've been asked a hundred times; Josie, too. I'm twenty-one now, and—and—I'm a-going."
"Service, indeed!" cried the silver voice of Josie, "not for me, thank you. I guess I can do better than that," and she peered into her sister's face roughly. Anne flushed, then grew fearfully pale.
"If you can, Josie," said she, very gently, "be sure that nobody will be gladder than I."
"Listen to me, Anne," said her father, looking at her with tears in his eyes. "You have sacrificed all your life as far as it has gone for my sake; you've been a devoted daughter, and all I've been able to give you in reward has been a love that few men feel for their most idolized children." As he said this his wife's eyes shone through grateful tears. "Lately I've noticed through grateful tears. 'Lately I've noticed here, and that you've kept out of my way—'"
"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Josie, spinning a pirouette.
"He came for—for—her!" faltered Anne, averting her face.
"He came at first for you," said her father, "and you discouraged him because you were too generous to forsake your poor, unlucky father."
"Well, I'm sure!" pouted Josie, her delicate cheeks flushing and her gem-blue eyes flashing; "as if I wouldn't do just as much for you as Nan! And he never came to see her! It was always me! Wasn't it, Nan! Tell them it was."
"Always you," said Anne, faintly, her face still averted.
"And when we're married," continued the

little beauty, "see if I don't help father out of all his troubles. Arch has ever so much money, and I guess he ain't able to refuse me anything I want."
"Foolish child!" exclaimed Kercheval, gloomily. "I have fallen low, but not so low as to be able to live at the expense of my son-in-law. Marry, if you please, my girl, but not for my sake."
"Father—mother—you must let me go!" said Anne, turning at last to them her face, from which all the youth and beauty seemed mysteriously to have fled. "I can do nothing to help you here, and I can, and will, out in the world. Give me your consent, and I'll go to-morrow."
"Go! where, Anne?" cried a ringing voice.
All turned in startled surprise toward the open door, the dog hurrying himself from his lazy sprawling on the hearth upon the stalwart young giant who stood on the threshold, with a short bark of delight.
"It's Arch! it's Arch!" exclaimed Josie, fluttering forward with two pretty hands outstretched, and an aura of smiles on her sweet baby face.
"Yes, it's Arch," said he, quietly putting her to one side as he had already put the dog, and continuing his point-blank stare at Anne; "and it seems I've come just in time to put in my word in a little matter here that concerns me about as close as anybody. If I ain't mistaken, I heard Anne say she was a-going out into the world so she could help her folks out of their troubles. Now, good people, I've got something to say to that. I've been coming here, off and on, this year past, and you may be sure it wasn't for nothing, either. I'm well-to-do, I've got the biggest store in Silver-Lead, and money in the bank besides; now, old man, I want your daughter for my wife, merely sayin', casual like, that my wife's father shall never lack as long as we've got a crust to share with him and his."
CHAPTER XI.
AN INTERRUPTED WOOING.
THIS vainly speech came upon them all like a thunderbolt.
First, there was Josie, the beauty, the belle, the coquette, the irresistible, willful little sprite, who had, as a matter of course, always appropriated the gallant young miner's attentions; here he was looking at Anne as if he would eat her up, while she stood unnoticed by his side!
Then there was the despairing father, who had just been pouring out his remorse and self-upbraiding over the devoted self-denial of his eldest daughter; in a moment he saw her rewarded for all her happiness assured, just as he would have had it!
Her mother, too—what a gush of gratified love swept through her long-tried heart!
Even Dare-devil Ned got up on his elbow and emitted a long shrill whistle, ending in a melancholy mew like a suffering cat as he turned his mocking eyes on the discomfited Josie.
But Anne, with a very pale, proud smile, looked into Arch Arran's eager face, with these words, bravely spoken:
"Look here, Arch; you've named no names, so as yet nobody knows which of us two girls you've set your heart on. Before you do say which, I want to tell you that I hope it's Josie, because it—it—needn't be me. Stop—I ain't through yet. As long as my father is as unlucky as he is now, he needs me—and he needs me free."
"Now, Anne, it's my turn," said the young man, a quiet smile lighting up his splendid, dark, half-Spanish countenance; "in your heart you know just as well as I do which of ye I'm after. Friends?—he waved his tawny hand to bespeak the attention of the father and mother, but kept his fervent gaze upon the young girl with that expression a man only wears once in his life—"friends, I've loved her ever since I saw her first, diggin' along of her father in the same furrow, an' laughin' as if she liked it; right on through all them months, while she took the burden of this misfortunate house upon her own shoulders, an' planted, reaped, garnered,

starved herself and went naked, that the rest might have plenty; many's the day I've squirmed under the knowledge of these things like as they was live coals on my bare back, not darin' for to put out a hand to help, 'cos you, neighbor Kercheval, was a gentleman, an' she was a gentleman's daughter! But things has come to a pint, an' I make bold to speak out, and to say before ye all—Anne, will you marry me?"
Oh, the divine radiance upon her face! It made it lovelier far, in spite of the irregularity of the features, and the deep brown of her complexion, than Josie's, of which eyes, nose, and dewy mouth were purely classical, while the skin was untanned satin, white as any lady's!
But when he stopped the delicious side of love-words, the light died out, and all the rich warmth with it. She put a strong restraint upon herself, and answered, quietly:
"Thank you, Arch; you are worthy any good woman's love, and I hope you'll get it yet. But I warned you—you shouldn't have asked me; I have no thoughts of marriage, and, as far as I can see, never will have. Are you sure you know your own mind? Come, now, isn't it Josie you like best?" and she looked at him imploringly.
The little beauty, who had been scowling like a little fiend, here uttered a scream of scornful remonstrance, and flounced to the opposite side of the kitchen, Arran following her charming figure with a cool stare.
"Thank you all the same, Anne," said he, "I don't want a fine lady to put silk dresses upon and watch curl her hair—I want a woman—a real woman, God bless her, worth a woman of your fine ladies—I want you, Anne—you, my brave, self-forgetting, noble-hearted girl—and for your sake I swear to devote myself to your father exactly as you have done, and, thank the Lord, I've the means to set him on his feet right now!"
Anne bent a heartrending look on her father. He made her a mute sign, to accept her lover with his heartfelt blessing upon the union—but by the bitter, indomitable setting of the lips, she read his unalterable resolution to hold himself forever above the degradation of accepting money, which he might never be able to return, from his daughter's husband.
Jonas Kercheval had once been a gentleman—he could not place himself under obligations to—a laborer.
A suffocating gasp, as of one in flames, escaped her.
"I must—say—no! and, believe me, I mean it," she said, in a deliberate way.
With two strides he was at her side, his fiery eyes scanning her blanching features incredulously.
"You don't mean it!" he cried, exultingly: "don't play the coquette, Anne; leave that for silly little Josie. You and me was cut out for each other. Come, sweetheart, look up and tell them you'll be my wife."
He passed his arm round her and would have drawn her to his side, but she eluded him, and waving him back with a sudden cold composure, said:
"No."
He stood dumb. There was no mistaking her now!
Josie stole behind her sister, and laid her burning cheek against her shoulder with a soft, caressing pressure. Anne felt and understood it, and repeated yet more inexorably:
"No, Arch Arran. I can't be your wife."
"Why?" queried the young man, bluntly.
"You want to be married for love, don't you?" she asked.
"That's so," said he; "but you daren't say you don't love me."
She faltered a moment before that cruel test, but perceiving not only the eyes of her lover to be fixed upon her in breathless suspense, but those of her father also, she soon answered in a voice from which she had extracted every suspicion of feeling:
"You are mistaken. I don't love you. There, quit talking about it." And she turned to escape to her own room.
Arch Arran caught her in a fierce grip, and for a time there was dead silence. All felt more or less awed by the gradual darkening of that spirited Southern face.
"Anne Kercheval," muttered he, hoarsely, "you can't deceive me. You lie to me, because you think your father needs you. I've said all I can about helping him—if you don't believe my word, I'll write it down and give you the paper."
"Stop!" she exclaimed, stung anew by the sight of her father writhing in exquisite humiliation under her lover's words; "you're entirely, entirely mistaken—I tell you nothing could induce me to marry you or any one else just now, so there's an end."
Seeing her thus resolved, man-like, he promptly misunderstood her.
Self-sacrifice, to a man in love, is all but impossibility. He desires; he will possess; heaven itself shall not say him nay.
On the contrary, a woman's love opens that golden gate of the soul, self-abnegation; she who was pleasure-loving as the seething bird, leaves a sweet sobriety, a brooding care for others, becomes, in short, a woman, capable of the unutterable unselfishness of the wife and mother.
Judge then what an enigma a woman is to her lover, when the nobility of her soul inspires her to such conduct as Anne's!
His cheeks whitened and his eyes burned. He cursed her in his somber fury.
"Go, for a cold-hearted Jeezabel, and perfidious go with ye!" he ground out between his teeth; "what a fool I've been to believe a woman's eye could speak the truth! Well, well, that's over. Farewell at I'm off for Cal-cornia, for I swear I won't stay in a place where I can see her, with her lures and lies."
"Stop, my boy!" cried Kercheval, firmly.
Arran was at the door, but at this, turned again.
"Anne," said her father, "give him your hand. No! My child, I entreat, I command you! What! would you heap sorrow on an old man whose heart has scarcely room for more?"
Anne only made a mute gesture of dissent, and staggered toward the door of her own chamber, seeing which, Arran put the unhappy man aside and strode back to the kitchen door.
At this moment a stranger appeared on the threshold, and, wrapped in his cloak, with his arms folded, gazed round upon the excited group before him, with an expression so singular that it riveted the instant attention of every soul present.
He was about middle height, his eye blue and

am glad you have called upon me, Branthope, because I was about to visit Branthope Villa, and it is more agreeable to have seen you first. Her listener winced—she was coming there to claim her fortune, upon which he had been so successfully luxuriating.

"Margaret is actually growing parsimonious," he said to himself; "as if Martinique's property was not enough for her!" but he forced himself to smile, and to say how delighted Mrs. Maxwell and himself would be to receive so illustrious a guest.

"I shall not come as a guest. I shall come to take possession of my homestead and set up my own household gods there. You turn pale, Branthope, so I suppose I had better hasten to assure you that I do not intend to ruin you, although, probably, to reduce your expectations a good deal. How much did Uncle Peter leave, when his estates were settled?"

"About a hundred and ten thousand dollars." "Very well. It seems to have been decided by the voice of the people that I am capable of making a fortune for myself—I suppose I can earn money by my profession a great deal faster than you can by yours. I have not the heart, cruelly as you have treated me, cousin, to take from you all that for which you paid the dear price of your integrity. You ought to enjoy that for which you have sacrificed so much! Then, too, being nephew, as I am nice, of the man who left it, I consider you entitled to share with myself, though your name is not mentioned in the will. In short, I want the old homestead, for I love it, and Uncle Peter's memory makes it sacred to me. I want, also, five thousand dollars to buy my wedding outfit. The remainder you shall have. I will make out the papers as soon as convenient after I come home."

"You are generous, as always, Margaret," stammered her cousin, much relieved, yet a shade of a pang at having to resign the Villa and its surroundings, so convenient as a summer resort. "Did you say you wanted to buy a wedding outfit?" putting on a gay air, while conscious of a second pang of wounded vanity to think his desertion had not blighted all fancies of that kind.

"Yes, I said so. I am engaged to be married; and I tell you this, not because I expect to borrow respectability from you or your connections, but because you are a relative, bearing the family name, and I prefer to be in my own home, and with relative—even such one as you—for the few weeks previous to my marriage. The gentleman to whom I am engaged—"

"Kellogg, I'll be bound."

"Yes—Mr. Kellogg is proud, and has a high position to sustain. He is a man of great trust—absolutely without knowledge of me or mine, except what he has gained from my own lips. Though a man of the world and necessarily, by his profession, thrown into the society of women more or less of adventurers, he has believed me, respected me, done me the highest honor, offering me his heart and name. He asks nothing in return but me and my love; but I, too, am proud. I take pleasure in the thought that I shall be married in my own house, with a splendor worthy of him and his fame. Every circumstance of my other marriage shall rest, without exception, under the name of Kellogg. You, sir, will have to come to the confessional before him; it is the only atonement I demand for the injury you did me. As to your wife, I could not, for her sake, mortify you before her, nor shake her confidence in you. I am quite willing that she should believe you really thought me dead, if, indeed, she knows anything about me. But from the day I come to the Villa she must be my guest, not I hers."

"But she saw you, two or three times, playing the part of servant-girl! She will be sure to recognize you."

"I think not. Dress makes a world of difference. If she sees a resemblance she will perceive herself that it is only a fancy of her own."

"Then that confounded—excuse me, cousin—dressing-maid—she will recognize you, I think!" "Oh, is that with you still, am I so glad. That child will do as I tell her; she will never make trouble."

"How did you hear of Martinique's death?" asked Branthope, clearing his throat, for he found his voice husky, despite of his efforts to appear quite at his ease.

"I saw him die," she shuddered as she said it—even the memory of that man always set her nerves quivering, so long had he haunted and tortured her.

Branthope flinched in his chair, got up, looked out of the window, pulled down the blind, drew it up.

"I did not know you were living together—that was his way of asking the question. 'How did he die?'"

"By accident."

"Margaret, you are not—you did not—"

"No, I did not kill him. I had, now, that I was never tempted to. With the thousand dollars you sent me I took passage for London, very secretly, I thought, for I had become aware that Mr. Martinique was in the city. When the steamer was only about forty-eight hours from Liverpool, he suddenly appeared in the cabin, having tracked me on board the boat, taken passage in it also, and remained in his state-room long enough to heighten my misery and his triumph when he revealed his presence. God's ways are not our ways, Branthope. At that very hour the ship was drifting in, and, freighted in the harbor, the fire was kept down all day, but that night we were obliged to take to the boats. Mr. Martinique fell into the sea and was drowned. I, with others in our boat, suffered many perils and great hardships, on account of the winter weather, drifting two days and a night, but at the close of the second day we were taken up by a sailing vessel, which, to double our good fortune, was bound for the same port for which we had started, and we arrived in Liverpool, only six days late. I heard of the safe arrival of two of the three boats—the fourth had never been heard from, I believe. I went directly to London with some theatrical friends, whose acquaintance I had made on board the steamer—Mr. Kellogg among them—and began to study for my new career. At the end of three months I had a fine success in their solicitation, and, upon the stage, in London, in a fashionable theater, at the height of the season I was successful, partly through my own merits, and more, perhaps, from being so nobly sustained. I played a brief engagement, which is renewed for next winter; then, hastened home to make preparations for a marriage, which Mr. Kellogg urges, with truth, ought to be consummated speedily, in view of our profession, and the fact that we have so many engagements to play together."

"She smiled here, more to herself than upon her listener, knowing she did, so well, that her lover would have been equally ready with other arguments in favor of an early wedding, had not these specious ones been at hand."

"Now you know," she added, "all that is necessary of my history since I left this city. In two weeks my engagement at the Winter Garden ends. I shall then come to Branthope Villa for a few weeks of repose, and to prepare for the event which is fixed for the first day of September. Good-morning."

Mr. Maxwell went down the staircase with the air of a man who has got in the wrong house.

CHAPTER XX.

A BIT OF TROPICAL LIFE.

That long, rolling wave which washed Senor Martinique away from the burning ship, away from the waiting boat, away from the shuddering gaze of the woman he had so persecuted, was not so fatal as those witnessing his disappearance believed. Night and the storm swirled him up, but the energies of life were fierce in his thin, peculiar frame, and fiery heart; he was not the man to sink without a stubborn fight with the elements. Many moments he sustained himself, although conscious that he was being carried further from hope of aid; and, when nearly exhausted and half in-

sensible, was rewarded for his energy by feeling his arm come in contact with some hard substance, after which he immediately grasped, and found it to be one of the chairs or stools belonging to the ship, and which was provided with an air-tight compartment, making it sufficiently buoyant to enable him to rest himself upon it. Hope revived with this temporary aid; all night the senior clung to his life-preserver, numb, cold, and drowsy, sometimes actually asleep, but ever tightly clasping this straw "which was destined to be his salvation."

For with the gray light of dawn there came a faint shout, sounding far away and dreamy in his half-conscious ear, but which, in reality, was close at hand. The second boat, manned by the second mate, had driven about, but not enough, at the mercy of the wind and waves, yet Fate had so decreed that her wild, erratic path should cross that of the floating chair and its clinging freight, just when the light was strong enough to make the situation evident. With great difficulty, and not without risk to those already crowded in the boat, the senior was dragged in, and revived by the attentions of those about him, who divided with him their dryer garments, and shared with him their bread and brandy.

This was only the beginning of his good fortune. Before three o'clock of that first day they hailed a large and handsome clipper-ship, which hove to and took them up, giving them hospitable welcome. One of the first questions asked by the "forlorn and shipwrecked brothers" was, where was the ship bound? They were assured that she was bound for Havana, with a cargo of cotton cloth and iron, to return with sugar. This was certainly not the direction they would have chosen; but life is so sweet for people to stand on trifles, and gratitude was the uppermost feeling with the rescued. They had, too, a lively hope that they should fall in with some Havana vessel, England-bound, when they could retrace their course. The captain assured them there was every prospect of this, as such meetings were frequent. Whatever interests the other rescued passengers may have had of business or family ties, no one was quite so eager as the senior in the sharp watch for the expected vessel. He would walk the decks all day long, gnawing his lips with restlessness, feeling that she whom he had tried so long to secure to himself was safe and happy with that audacious actor whom he had as only the jealous can hate. He did nothing but do but make pictures of the state of affairs between Margaret and Mr. Kellogg. Once he burst into a wicked laugh: "She played a pretty successful trick on me when she disappeared in the river, and I went to the expense of a funeral for her. A Roman! A Roman! For your Oliver, Lady Martinique! I am as hard to drown as you are! What a welcome you'll give me, sweet wife, when next I present myself to you. I shall bring that little flirtation of yours to a speedy end."

But they did not fall in with a homeward-bound vessel; and as the senior began to realize how long it must be before he could hope to reach London, and how exceedingly doubtful it was if Margaret herself would ever reach there, his exulting changed to the most grating impatience. One thing was sure, and that was the fact that those two had escaped in company. Had they taken separate boats, he might have been reconciled; but as it was, should they be taken to China or Australia, they would still be together, he free from him, and be happy. This bitter certainty made the lagging days anything but enviable.

Six weeks passed before he set his foot upon the wharf at Havana. He proposed an immediate return to England, by steamer; but so much time having already elapsed, and he was so near his own home, prudence demanded that he should pay a visit to Maracaibo, before starting again for an indefinite time. Necessity, too, had something to do with his decision; for, although he had a few hundred dollars in English bank-notes, well-soaked and dried, but not destroyed, in his purse, he had left his money, chiefly in gold, in his trunks, in his hat, and in the pockets of his coat. Upon inquiry made of an acquaintance whose warehouse was near at hand, he learned that a vessel from New York was then on the point of proceeding on to Maracaibo, and in less than an hour he was on his homeward way.

"What's the name of the passenger?" asked one sailor of another, as the senior, the next day, came on deck, and beginning his promenade, looked at the rigging, the sky, and the water, as if he longed to command them to double duty.

"He's a mighty uneasy sort of traveler; looks as if he'd like to get astride a streak of crossed lightning."

"His name is Martinique. I heard him say. He belongs in Maracaibo. Was on his way to Liverpool in the steamer burned up; he was picked up by a vessel and brought to Cuba. But I don't know, I reckon. I don't blame him for looking equally."

"Martinique, hey!—lives at Maracaibo! Jerusha! I'd like to tell this to my Sally. I promised her, 'fore I shipped, when I got there I'd fix my eye on that very chap.'"

"Quintance or not?"

"Not exactly. Intimate friend of a young lady we know."

"Ay, ay. She'll be tickled to learn he was burnt up."

"It's my private opinion she wouldn't care how quick he began his maternal course of life, but I don't confide in his companion."

His interest in the passenger was greatly increased after learning his name, and from that time forward, as long as they were bound in the same direction, he kept a sharp eye on the unconscious senior.

Zekiel Griggs, late canal-boatman, in the absence of steady winter employment, and under the magic persuasion of extra pay, had been induced to part from his Sally, and the two little ones, and enter upon an enlarged sphere of observation and action, having left his family comfortably settled in the tenement-house, and shipped for one trip to Maracaibo and back.

The vessel in which he sailed was not one of the staunchest; but having been favored with good weather, they reached port in safety, not without, with becomingly convinced that important repairs would be necessary before attempting the return trip. This did not trouble the jolly sailors half as much as it did the owners and masters; they were quite equal to a holiday, especially in that tropical region, looking so "so heavenly" in the eyes of contrast with the ice and snow they had left behind.

Zekie, who, like so many honest, hard-working Yankees, had a spice of the richest poetry in his queer composition, was delighted; it was his first experience away from home, and as he saw the deep-blue sky, and felt the kiss of the balmy winds, he only longed that Sally might be there, with the babies, to enjoy what he enjoyed.

"She would feel more romantic than ever," mused the good husband, thinking, with a sigh, of the far-away and not over-pleasant tenement-house, and without a reproachful memory of neglected buttons and baker's bread; "she could squat in the sun, like one of these here natives, and read novels from mornin' till night. No fire to build, and not much clothes to wear—and for cookin', a few of those penny flat-jacks, and plenty of juicy fruit, would be all nature requires."

In fact, for a few days the languid effects of the new climate were such on the hardy sailor, that he had Tennyson in his heart if not in his mind, and if he could have put his feelings into words, would have said, with the "Lotus-eaters,"

"Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the sure Oh, rest ye, brother-mariners, we will wander more."

But in the midst of this indolent enjoyment, he did not forget the interest felt in every movement of the senior Martinique, in whose company he had been thrown by such mere chance. So that's the fellow that makes my dear

young lady such trouble," he would say to himself, over and over, always after meeting the senior, which he continued to do frequently for some days after the vessel came into port; for the senior had warehouses on the dock, and was very busy looking into his affairs. "He's an eye like one of them serpents they say grows lively about here. Handsome, but I don't like the cut of his jib. If he sets his foot down, I swear, it would take a forty-horse power to make him take it up. I wonder if he's come back to settle."

It was soon evident that he had not come back to settle; for, in less than a week, the senior was off again for Havana, from whence he was to take the steamer to Liverpool.

"What's in the wind now?" queried Zekiel to himself, squinting his eye as if in that way he could see more clearly into the intentions of the restless traveler. "He's bound for England—I'll lose my guess if he ain't on the track of my dear Miss Lucille. If his ship hadn't been lost, maybe he'd 'a' had her before now"—he had not chanced to learn that the vessel destroyed was the one in which Margaret took passage, or he would have been still more uneasy.

Zekiel's inquisitiveness came into full play, as he lingered about the town during the hours when he was off duty, chatting with some of the natives as could speak broken English; he soon had almost the whole history of the rich senior Martinique, as far as it was known, in his birthplace. The brown old woman who washed his clothes for him was a perfect mine of information, and two or three rattle silver pieces opened her heart and loosened her tongue like magic. "Berry nice man—oh, berry; but an awful temper. She knew, for she used to be a servant in the family, when he lived with his wife."

"Wife! then the senior was a widower, was he?"

"Quintance? It might be—it might not."

By degrees he got the whole story from her; how the senior had married a girl very beautiful, but not rich, with no great relatives to take her part; how he used to be fond of her, and very jealous, and how some day, after a quarrel, and a passion for some other gentleman, who might have danced with her at a ball, or spoken to her on the plaza. How she, too, had a temper and was of her own—and how, finally, after she left him, or was driven away by him, and went to live in a small place back in the country, and to work like a common woman, for he would make her no allowance.

"And how long since she died?" asked Zekiel, with great interest.

"Quintance?" the narrator had heard that the senior's wife died two years ago that summer. The senior had had word sent to him that she was dead; but he had not even put a black band on his sombrero—"little he cared—his bachelor life suited him better."

"What named the discarded wife a go-by?"

"Quintance?" the narrator had heard that the senior's wife died two years ago that summer. The senior had had word sent to him that she was dead; but he had not even put a black band on his sombrero—"little he cared—his bachelor life suited him better."

"Had the senior ever obtained a legal separation from her?"

"Quintance?" the narrator had heard that the senior's wife died two years ago that summer. The senior had had word sent to him that she was dead; but he had not even put a black band on his sombrero—"little he cared—his bachelor life suited him better."

"If the lady is dead, when she died—all about it, I thought she had died. I don't want to sail with out me," muttered Zekiel. "I'd do more'n that to serve Miss Lucille, and who knows how important this information may prove to her?"

CHAPTER XXI.

APPROACHING THE VERGE.

BRANTHOPE MAXWELL had a fortnight in which to prepare a fable which should account for his cousin's return without exciting too much gossip and astonishment in the neighborhood. And the fable of Margaret was coming. Branthope had had such a relative, who would have been joint heir with him to his uncle's estate, had she lived; but that she had been drowned while on her bridal-tour. Branthope had only to inform her that this supposed death was a mistake; that she had been rescued, and that now, her husband having died, she had taken to the stage, for which she had always evinced an extraordinary inclination; that the Mrs. Martinique playing with such *ecart*, in New York, was she; that she was a woman to be proud of; that he, in his cousin's regard, was the most devoted friend she had; and that he would be glad to see her, and to be assured that she was well.

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Maxwell, told me you were still with them; for you may be sure that I inquired after you. So, you are well and happy?"

Tina, laughing and crying before, now added blushing to the picture of her excitement.

"Oh, yes; I'm happier than ever I was in my life. I like it so much in the country! And I'm so glad to see you, Mrs. Martinique, and to know that nothing terrible happened to you, after all. I've fretted so much about you! And now you have come out in your true character! Don't you remember I used to accuse you of being a princess in disguise! I knew it. But I never dreamed that you were a married woman."

"I was married, but I fled from the man to whom I was bound, within an hour after the ceremony was performed. It was to avoid him that I had so much trouble. But that is all over now—he is dead. And I am to marry one whom I love, Tina!" As she uttered this last sentence, a mysterious smile lighted her beautiful face.

"I wish never, never to refer to what is past. Think of me now as a happy girl, about to wed the man I love!"

Then, as she threw off her hat and light mantle, and looked about the room, a sudden cloud shadowed her bright face, tears rushed to her eyes, and she exclaimed:

"This was Uncle Peter's room. I bade him good-bye, here!"

She was silent for some little time. Tina saw that she was weeping. It brings all back to me, my childhood, dear departed father. I seem to see him yesterday that I turned at this door to bid him a gay farewell for four or five brief days. Ah! how strange! Who of us knows where our next step will bring us? Tina, if there is time I should like to walk to the churchyard before tea; I know the place—it is but half a mile from here."

Tina said there would be time, and, at her request, accompanied her. Mrs. Maxwell thought it quite natural that she should desire to visit her uncle's grave, cheerfully delaying her own desire to make the acquaintance of her new cousin, who would arrive in the evening.

When Margaret appeared at table, one might guess that she had been weeping; but her face was like a rose after a shower, all the brighter for the traces of past emotion. Mrs. Maxwell was "perfectly charmed" with her so beautiful and good-tempered, and intellectual, she could not sufficiently admire her.

"I feel as if I had gained a sister," she said, before tea was over. Then, that same evening, when Margaret had sung something for her at the piano, she burst out again with:

"Branthope, I can't account for it!"

"Why you and Margaret—may I call you so?—did not make a match. I don't see how you have helped being desperately in love with her. But perhaps neither of you believe in cousins marrying."

"That's just it," answered Margaret, placidly; "even second cousins should not marry together. If we, as children, had fancied each other, and rashly united ourselves, behold, what a mistake! I should never have met my real partner, and Branthope would have missed the sweetest woman who is now engaged in spoiling him."

"That would have been unfortunate—for me," smiled Violet, her hand creeping into her husband's, who was looking full at his cousin with the bold glance of a man who, if possible, if there was not some shade of regret on her handsome face. The concealed puppy had half expected that the old associations connected with her home, and the sight of him there, devoted to his pretty wife, would make the woman whom he had once jilted unhappy.

The next morning, Mrs. Maxwell offered to resign in her favor. "Branthope says that you intended making a short tour at that time, and then returning to your city home. If so, I will keep the villa open another month, for if Mr. Kellogg likes it, I know of no place where I should so like to spend our honeymoon. And at present I need rest—absolute repose—for I have been badly tossed about the last few months."

"You shall enjoy the fullness of peace," said Violet. "I'm tired of company, myself, this warm weather, so, except such friends as come of their own accord, I will invite no visitors. I suppose Mr. Kellogg feels that he has the freedom of the house!"

"Thank you, Mrs. Maxwell,

DREAMLAND.

BY MRS. ADDIE D. ROLLSTON.

'Twas the breath of the flowers
That through long summer hours
In beauty and silence were springing,
And the waves of the river
That with sunlight and shadow
In murmuring whispers were singing—

That called thoughts of gladness
To moments of sadness
And brightened the beautiful day,
With memories of olden
Of days sweet and golden
That vanished in mist-wreaths away!

Fond hopes I had cherished,
Fair dreams that had perished
Came back with the summer-time glow,
When I reaped for the flowers
That grew in youth's hours
A harvest of passionate woe!

Oh! dreamland of splendor!
Where thoughts sweet and tender
Can come at the heart's faintest call!
There is joy for the meekest
And strength for the weakest
Who enter thy glittering hall!

Then faces will greet us,
And footsteps will meet us
That long ago vanished away!
And the heart will grow tender
'Neath the mystical splendor
And glow of the beautiful day!

And vows that were spoken
To be rudely broken
Will thrill with the sweetness of old,
And spirits that languish
With sorrow and anguish
The pinnacles of peace will unfold!

Stories of Chivalry.

THE LETTRES DE CACHET.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

"I thought you were going to make a suggestion, Duke."

"For once your thoughts were right, Marmon. Lettres de cachet are in the market. But not one would be given to Marmon de Briese. The Duke does not like the name. I bear, and the lieutenant of police dare not sell me one."

"The queen and yourself at the outs? Pray explain, for this is news to me. It will excite Parisian society."

"This nothing worth wasting time about. I wouldn't fight with her majesty, and so she has forbidden me the palace. All Paris is wondering why Marmon de Briese was not present at the reception of Don Juan, of Spain. I don't care that for the queen, and the handsome young speaker snatched his fingers derisively. 'I love her no gratitude. Our people's morals might mend if she were back in Poland.'"

"Not so loud, please. There are people in the next room, and your voice is known everywhere. But, to business. If a lettre de cachet will serve you, one you shall have."

The young nobleman's eye flashed joyfully. "It alone can make me happy. I do not think that Adele—my adorable angel of the Rue Montmartre—thinks any too well of him. She has never shown any aversion for me, and I have been on my knees before the peerless creature within the fortnight. Her father, the count, is bound to this Halise, and Adele has consented to become his bride. That is the way I look at it. A lettre de cachet, my dear Duke, and I am the happiest man in France. Once wedded, I will take my bride beyond the power of that Polish woman who calls herself Queen of France."

"When do you wish it?"

"This night, Duke. To-morrow is the wedding-day. He shall be arrested before day-light."

"At eleven to-night, Marmon. You shall have the instrument of victory placed in your hands at that hour."

The couple separated over a bottle of wine which the waiter brought into the gorgeous salon on a silver waiter. They parted in high spirits, and the youngest of the pair, flushed with liquor and anticipated triumph.

Marmon de Briese was a young nobleman well known in Paris. He was gay, gallant, a good singer and an expert swordsman. But, he was crafty; in an *affaire du coeur* he would stoop to anything in order to gain his desired ends. The anything in order to gain his desired ends. The anything alone had failed to ensnare the heart of the wild young Frenchman. He feared the jealous heart of Louis the Fifteenth, and his cunning had caused his ostracism from court. Maria was taking her revenge.

At once he was cut off from royal favors. He was fearful lest a *lettre de cachet* might be thrust into his face, and consign him to the relentless keeper of the bastille.

Marmon de Briese was actually in love, as we have heard him tell his friend, the Duke of Velay. But, he feared that the beautiful Adele to the altar. He saw no success save in the grant of a *lettre de cachet* with which he could lock the rival up, and secure the girl for himself.

But the queen would grant him none, and he knew that he dared not apply in person to the lieutenant of police. Although the infamous *lettres de cachet* were for sale in Paris, Marmon de Briese, wealthy as he was, had not money enough to buy one.

Eleven o'clock found the young nobleman in the *salon* waiting for his friend, the Duke of Velay. He came at last a little late, but none the less welcomed for he placed the coveted document in De Briese's hand.

"This opens the bastille's iron doors to Jean Halise, and secures to me the whitest hand in Paris."

The cunning lover was triumphant, and as the first streaks of dawn were flashing over Paris Jean Halise was placed under arrest and thrust from De Briese's path.

So much for one *lettre de cachet*. The arrest did not cause much excitement, for such affairs were too common to excite comment, and the unfortunate lover found himself securely imprisoned in the bastille. He knew that some enemy was at work, and gnashed his teeth when he thought of the name of Marmon de Briese.

"This is your work, cunning villain. I wish I could cross swords with you."

He sent his case to the king, but Louis was buried too deeply in debauchery to think of a prisoner in the bastille. He tore the letter into fragments and sent the petitioner word that "stone walls were a good cure for hot heads."

The king never inquired into the cause of an arrest, and he was not going to depart from his established custom for the sake of such an obscure man as Jean Halise.

"How progresses your suit with the charming Adele, Marmon?" the Duke of Velay inquired of this after of the king. The young lark does not know what merit his songs make. He is making an admirable court fool, while Adele is smiling on Marmon de Briese, who has slipped a ring over her finger.

"Indeed! so soon, my boy?"

"Courtships should not be years, my dear Duke. It is well that the queen knows nothing of this affair of mine. I understand that she has inquired after me within the past fortnight, and not in very good humor either."

"A quick courtship then, Marmon. Lettres de cachet are still fashionable."

The young nobleman grew slightly pale, and drew nearer to the Duke.

"It takes place to-morrow evening at nine," he whispered. "The priest, a witness, her father—that is all. At ten a carriage. Madrid."

The master of Velay understood the crisp sentences.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "You are a match for the Polish woman."

"And for Monsieur Halise!" said De Briese, with a meaning smile. "I defy the queen to discover my plans. Nobody suspects anything. The *lettre de cachet*, my noble Duke, is making me happy."

The young nobleman and his friend were drinking to the success of their tricks when a young woman appeared at the Tuileries, and requested an audience with the queen.

Maria Leczenski was unengaged at the moment, and the person was admitted into her presence. It was near midnight and the queen's eyes were heavy; but they flashed at the wonderful beauty of her visitor.

"Well," said the queen, regarding the girl with admiration.

"I pray that your majesty grant me a *lettre de cachet*," was the reply which startled the queen.

"They belong to the state," was her cautious rejoinder. "In the hands of indiscreet persons they are productive of harm. We cannot grant you one."

The countenance of the queen's visitor fell.

"What do you want with a *lettre de cachet*?" asked Maria Leczenski, coming forward.

"Revenge!" the girl cried. "I come here boldly and face the queen who has sold the infamous documents. I declare that they have not been refused by royalty itself to men who would deluge the scaffold with innocent blood. Maria Leczenski, the queen, has broken the best hearts in France by her sale of *lettres de cachet*. She has torn husband from wife, father from children, and separated lovers."

"Beware!" cried the queen, touching a bell.

"You are in the royal palace. I am the queen!"

"But not more a woman than myself!" was the girl's reply, as she drew a tiny dagger from her bosom.

"Do not start, Maria Leczenski!" she said. "This dagger shall not be stained with royal blood. Without the document which I seek to-night I would be hauled in my revenge. Give it to me or my heart will be in the royal palace—I will drive this dagger."

The queen stood like one petrified with horror in the center of the gorgeous chamber. She saw the dagger lifted on high and caught determination in her visitor's eyes.

"Stay!" she cried, putting forth her jeweled hands. "For whom is intended the *lettre de cachet*?"

The girl hesitated.

"My queen need not know," she said at length. "I will fill it out. Maria Leczenski will never wish to recall it."

"You shall have it!" said the queen, going to a table from which she took one of the all-potent documents. "I admire your daring. The time is coming when these infamous *lettres* will no longer curse this country. Remember that whoever you send to prison shall not be released until you command it. What is your name, fair lady?"

The girl put up the dagger and timidly approached the queen.

"Adele Dumarte."

A flash of intelligence lit up the sovereign's face.

"Ah! yes!" she exclaimed. "Your lover is imprisoned in the bastille. Do you not seek his release?"

"My wedding takes place to-morrow evening at nine—at least the bridegroom is to greet me there."

"Not unless the prison gives up its inmate," the queen replied.

"Ay," smiled the girl. "One lover in prison, another at large!"

The musical laugh of the Polish woman greeted the girl's witty reply, and a minute later the little figure was entering a carriage just beyond the palace gates.

The postilion whipped up the horses and over the narrow streets the cumbersome vehicle flew. Adele Dumarte, laughing with joy, pressed the *lettre de cachet* to her heart.

The stately home of the Dumarte family in the Rue Montmartre did not exhibit any signs of animation to pedestrians on the following night. The heavy shutters had been tightly drawn, and a silence that seemed ominous hung over the mansion.

But it was not deserted. One of the most stirring love dramas of France was approaching its denouement within its walls.

Adele glided from room to room with elastic step. She looked like a person about to achieve a triumph greater than the one over the queen of France. Her father sat in one corner of the lofty, brilliantly lighted room, conversing with the Parisian lover, Marmon de Briese. The old count watched his daughter narrowly.

All at once he caught a signal from Adele—a gentle lifting of her snowy hand—and the priest entered the room. De Briese caught sight of his rival, rose, while Adele came forward with something in her hand.

He glanced at it, turned pale, and threw a furtive look around the room.

Adele was holding forth a *lettre de cachet*. De Briese's hand dropped upon the hilt of his sword as he started back, pale and excited.

"Traitor!" he cried to the girl. "I will not accept the document! In your own house I'll dye my sword in Dumarte blood before—"

Adele's petite slipper struck the floor, the great doors unfolded, and the cunning lover saw six gentlemen with muskets leveled at his breast.

Of course he submitted, and the plans of Adele Dumarte triumphed. His *lettre de cachet* sent him to the bastille, whose doors opened to release the man whom Adele sincerely loved—Jean Halise. After their nuptials Adele secured De Briese's release, and Maria Leczenski banished him.

The outrageous *lettres de cachet* were abolished in 1790, and France rejoiced from border to border.

Nobody's Boy:

OR,

THE STOLEN CHILD.

BY CHARLES MORRIS.

CHAPTER IX.

NICODEMUS TO THE RESCUE.

COLONEL GREEN was dazed for an instant by the suddenness of Pete's movement, and the violence with which the door had been flung open in his face.

The boy could easily have escaped during the confusion of his enemy, but escape was remote from his thoughts. It would have been to abandon Minnie Ellis to her foe, and Pete was too brave and daring by nature to consider his personal safety in such a case.

Instead, therefore, of making for the open stairway that lay at the end of the short passage, he looked round for a weapon of offense, which to attack his dangerous enemy.

There was nothing in sight, however, and Pete, with fierce thoughts, put his hand in his pocket for a large clasp-knife which he carried there.

Ere he could draw it the colonel was upon him, and had grasped him with both hands by the collar. The athletic man lifted the squirming lad as if he had been of no weight, and carried him toward the head of the stairs.

"I'll settle for you, you little imp," he said, with a fierce, hissing intonation.

Pete made no reply, but setting his teeth hard he clasped the colonel by the throat with both hands, and twisted himself like a snake round the body of his foe.

The contortions of the boy's limbs tripped up his burly antagonist, and down the two went at the very head of the stairs.

Colonel Green tried to recover himself, but Pete writhed viciously round him; he lost his balance, and man and boy, twined closely together, rolled down the steep stairs.

Over and over they went, bumping and thumping from step to step, the man getting the worst of the bargain from the closeness with which his little antagonist clung to him.

Bruised and bleeding, they reached the bottom with a thump that forced them asunder, flinging the boy five feet from his foe.

"For mercy's sake, whatever is the matter?" cried Mrs. Jones, rushing into the passage where they lay.

"I'll show this young hound what's the matter!" roared the colonel, rising angrily to his feet.

"You can't do it, kernal. I'm your boss for a pickled possum," cried Pete, springing up and grasping a heavy cane, which the colonel himself had left in the passage.

With a fierce oath the latter sprang toward him, catching a heavy blow from Pete on his arm as he did so.

Writhing the cane from the boy, he grasped him by the throat with suffocating force, and dragged him into the adjoining room.

"Now, you cub of a wild-cat, I'll settle your hash for you," yelled the infuriated man, raising the heavy cane, while a murderous light shone in his eyes.

Mrs. Jones screamed and ran toward them.

"Back, woman, blast you!" cried the colonel, furiously. "Do you want a settler yourself?"

At that moment a loud bark sounded outside the cabin.

Pete made a quick movement of recognition, and, choked as he had been, found breath to give vent to a sickly whistle.

The next instant the cane of Colonel Green descended viciously, with a blow that might have been deadly only that Pete squirmed and quickly aside. His heavy weapon struck the colonel himself on the leg with no light force.

Another fierce curse broke from the lips of the infuriated man. His muscular fingers closed more strongly about Pete's throat. He lifted the cane again with murderous intent.

At that instant the half-closed door was flung violently open, and a small animal bounded into the room.

It was Nicodemus, Pete's faithful dog. With a single look the intelligent animal took in the whole situation, and the danger of his master. Colonel Green, hardly noticing the animal, was about to repeat his blow. But at the moment the cane was lifted the teeth of the vicious dog buried themselves in his calf.

With a quick cry of pain he released the boy and turned to the assault of this new foe, kicking and cursing vigorously as he tried to get rid of his savage antagonist, who hung on with fierce tenacity.

The blow intended for the master fell with spiteful force on the dog, who rolled howling over on the floor.

The fiercest passions of the man were now aroused. He grasped the cane with both hands, and glared round the room. Nicodemus still lay howling on the floor. Pete crouched in a corner, not yet recovered from the terrible choking he had received. Mrs. Jones had fallen upon a chair, her face full of terror and dismay.

But in the doorway stood still another person, a man who seemed to have followed the dog into the house. He was a stout, determined-looking man. In his right hand he held a pistol, cocked and presented.

In the passage behind him stood the small figure of Minnie Ellis, her blue eyes wide open in wonder and dread. She had escaped through the open door of her prison.

Pete recognized the new-comer at a glance as the policeman who so lately had arrested him.

"Now your goose is cooked, kernal," he said, feelingly, as he laid his hand on Pete's head. "Tain't boys and babies you've got to play with now."

"So, it seems I am just in time to prevent murder," said the officer, severely, advancing a few steps into the room.

Who are you? cried the colonel, his fingers clasped savagely around his weapon. "What brings you here?"

"I am a policeman of the city of Toledo," said the officer. "It is my purpose to arrest you as the abductor of Minnie Ellis, and to shoot you if you attempt to escape."

His finger was at the trigger of the pistol. The look on his face showed that he meant all he said.

The villain glared with a wild, desperate glance round the room, with something of the look of a wild beast at bay.

His finger was at the trigger of the pistol. Pete, who was looking at him with an expression of open triumph.

"Drop that stick, kernal, and give in," said the boy. "You're sold out, and might as well cave. Tain't no use kicking. Don't you see that Barker is a-going to get you?"

"That for the Barker!" cried the desperate man, springing suddenly forward, and with a quick, upward blow of his stick knocking the pistol from the hands of the officer.

The weapon was disarmed as it fell, the ball whistled past the ears of Pete.

The officer stepped back from this sudden assault, his fingers tingling with pain from the blow they had received.

Colonel Green lost no time in taking advantage of the opportunity thus afforded him. A single spring took him through the doorway, and he rushed desperately for the open air, followed by Nicodemus, who had just regained his lost assurance.

Seizing his pistol the officer rushed out after him.

Pete, too, was following, but the face of Minnie in the passage-way brought him to a sudden halt.

She was pressed up closely against the wall, her face pallid with fear, her hands extended as if to ward off danger.

"Why," cried Pete, "don't be skered, gal. Nobody ain't a-going to hurt you. That catamount has made tracks, but it's my notion that he'll be brung up with a half-hitch. It ain't no slouch, the feller that's after him."

Was anybody after Pete? asked the startled Minnie. "I heard the pistol go off."

"Well, it kinder scared my ear," said Pete, feeling his organ of hearing. "Ain't no blood, though. Reckon I'm all sound."

"Oh, Pete, you were not shot!" cried Minnie, in terror.

"Well, didn't I just say I weren't? Ain't no use gettin' skered about it. I'm good for a dozen of the same sort, yet."

"Take me out of this dreadful place, won't you, Pete?" she half-whispered. "There's the woman in that room. I am so much afraid of her."

"Ain't got nothing to be afraid of while I'm along," said Pete, drawing his form up proudly. "Bet the kernal don't get you back—Hal! what's up now?"

This exclamation was caused by another pistol report outside the house. Taking Minnie by the hand, Pete hurried out.

There was a striking scene in view as they reached the open air. The river, as we have said, ran close by the house, just beyond the clump of bushes that had sprung up round the old log.

It was not properly the river that lay before them, however, for the clearing had been made just above the mouth of the Maumee, and the broad reach of water, dotted over with coming and departing vessels, that lay spread before them was Lake Erie.

Near at hand was a scene of more vital excitement. About one hundred feet from the bank of the river floated a boat, of which Colonel Green was just setting the sail. The white sheet had already caught the wind, and the light craft was beginning to feel its force and glide through the water.

Near the center of the stream a small, gracefully-built sloop was moving up the Maumee toward the city.

On the bank stood the baffled officer, having just fired at the fugitive the sole remaining load of his pistol.

Pete stood looking after the boat with fixed, resolute face.

Minnie was faintly brushing off her fingertips, with a dissatisfied expression of face.

"What are you doin' that fur?" asked Pete. She made no reply. He looked at his own hands, and saw, with a sense of shame, that his grasp had soiled her soft, white fingers.

CHAPTER X.

A STERN CHASE.

THE colonel's sail, now fully set, was filled with the light breeze, and the sharply-built boat began to cut swiftly through the water, under the guidance of her helm.

The disappointed pursuers looked with angry gaze after the light craft which was bearing from them so dangerous a foe.

And is this indeed Minnie Ellis? asked the officer, gazing with an interested glance into the fair face of the young girl beside him. "So far I have only guessed at it."

"That is my name, sir," she replied. "I am ever so thankful to you. It was terrible for you to attack that man. It makes me tremble to think of that."

"He is a desperate villain, indeed," was the reply.

"What gets me," said Pete, "is how you bounced in just about the time I was ready to squeal. I kin tell how Nicodemus smelt me out."

"I left the dog at home, but it ain't in anybody's boots to fling that dog. But you ain't got Nick's smellin' arrangement."

"The dog followed you, and I followed the dog," said the officer.

"Same as I followed the kernal. Well, it's a queer business, anyhow. You must have spect'ed me."

"I did suspect you, ever since the day you were arrested. I am sorry to have wronged you, but it is just as well for you, considering how things have turned out."

"Jist as well, and a little bit better," said Pete. "It were gettin' to be a narrer squeak and no mistake. It's blasted hard to see that cove sailin' away there and we standin' here like so many mice."

"Let him go," spoke the soft voice of Minnie. "I do not think he will try to do me any more harm."

"He is good for a rope if he comes inside of Toledo," said the officer. "I knew the man was a villain."

"Can't we chase him somehow?" said Pete. "I could only make the fellers aboard the sloop hear me."

As he spoke, the sloop, which was now nearly opposite them, shifted its helm and stood across toward their side of the river. She was soon within a hundred yards of them, standing up-stream.

"Aho, the sloop!" screamed Pete, at the top of his voice.

"Aho, there! what's up?" answered a man, who was looking curiously over the side.

"About ship and take us aboard. There's a better cargo for you in the bay than you'll find in Toledo."

"I heard a pistol-shot," said the man. "What's loose?"

"We have rescued Minnie Ellis, the stolen child," said the officer. "There goes the child-stealer."

By the blue flames!" cried the man, in sudden excitement. "Bring her round!" he cried to the helmsman. "Into the boat there, some of you. Is that the child?"

"Yes," replied the officer.

"I'll take you aboard then, and if my lively craft don't run down that fellow there's no virtue in canvas."

The boat now appeared round the sloop's side, propelled by one rower, whose athletic arms sent it rapidly through the water.

"Now, Minnie," said Pete, as it approached. "This man and he has got bizness in the wake of that pirate, and we ain't got no notion of leaving you here."

"No, no," she cried. "I wouldn't for the world be left alone with that woman. I am dreadfully afraid of her."

"Bless your gal, we ain't got no notion of leavin' you," said Pete. "Seems to me though we ought to grab the old lady," he said to the officer. "She might know somethin' handy."

The officer at once took the suggestion and started for the cabin. He was too late. It was empty. Mrs. Jones had taken the alarm and fled.

"Quick there!" cried the hasty tones of the captain of the sloop. "He is making headway. We have no time to waste."

No second invitation was needed. In a minute more they were all on board the boat and being rowed swiftly out to the larger vessel.

The captain stood at the low gunwale as the boat touched her side.

"Lift her up here," he called to the policeman.

Minnie shrank back from his hoarse tones and bearded face.

"Lord love you, child, you're not afraid of me, I hope," he said, rough kindness beaming from his eyes. "I've got just such another as you at home, and I would go through fire and water for her; or you either."

She no longer hesitated, but suffered herself to be handed up to the strong grasp of the captain, who deposited her lightly on the deck.

Pete was already on board, having sprung like a cat over the side of the vessel.

In another minute the other occupants of the boat were on board, the boat secured, and the vessel making way through the water.

The chase had gained considerable start during these evolutions, and was now some hundred yards in advance, standing up the western side of the bay.

"Bet heavy that I run him down," said the captain, as the sail over their heads took the wind, and the sloop moved forward with increasing speed.

"He's got a good skiff, but the little Mary Jane is something on a light breeze."

"Who is Mary Jane?" asked Minnie, in surprise, looking round for the person in question.

The sailor laughed loud and long.

"Bless your gal, I tell you, and I call her after my good wife at home."

It was now near twelve o'clock of a fine May morning. The sun stood directly overhead and poured his beams brilliantly down upon the water. Before them the shining surface of the bay stretched out, far as the eye could reach, dotted here and there with vessels heading in toward the mouth of the river, or outward bound from Toledo for some distant lake port.

The retreating lines of the boundaries of the bay were well wooded, the ax of the frontiersman not having yet denuded these shores of their native covering.

better let him go, captain? He won't come back to Toledo."

"Let him go?"

and I'll make my toes twinkle after you. And just you mind this one thing. Little boys and little dogs oughtn't never to speak afore they're spoke to."

Pete had spent some time in this confab with the dog, but he was not without his object in this delay.

He knew well that it would be perilous for him to meet Colonel Green in the forest. The desperate man would think little of sacrificing his life.

By holding back, and letting him reach the open country, Pete calculated to be able to call some farmer or villager to his aid, and by giving the hue and cry, to turn down the fugitive before he could gain much the start.

The dog had been trained to scent game in the woods, but this was the first time he had been on the track of any human being, except his master.

He followed the scent, however, with seeming ease, leading Pete at a rapid walk through the leafy aisles of the forest.

"Go it, old dog," cried Pete, with enthusiasm. "You're the animal for my money. Tain't a possum you're after now, Nick, but it's a cat-amout on two legs. Don't you be forgettin' your reputation, dog. Don't let the old fox double on you."

Nicodemus seemed excited by his master's voice, and traced the scent more rapidly than before.

"It's jist like trillin' injuns through 'he woods," said Pete, laughing. "If it ain't, I'll sell out. Never mind the bird, Nick. Tain't meadow-larks we're after now, but it's an old hawk. If you stop for coon or rabbit now I'll dispose of you, I will. Let out, little dog, and show your mettle. There's the open fields, and we kin use our eyes as well as our noses."

The woodland had ended, and an open country spread out before them. It was cultivated to some extent, but lay largely in grass, herds of sheep and cattle browsing here and there.

The course of the creek was marked by a line of trees that ran to the left of his position. Numerous farmhouses were visible from where he stood, and about a mile distant he could see the white walls and brown roofs of a village.

The country was level, but its many small groves and isolated trees prevented any very extended view. At some distance before him ran a country lane, stretching southwesterly toward the village.

"Hello, Nick," cried Pete; "there's a little fellow crawling along that road, that ought to be a six-footer if he was only here. He's creepin', too, 'bout as fast as two legs kin let out. I'll bet a b'iled tater it's the kurnel, and he's makin' for Woodville like greased lightning along a telegraph wire. Make up, old legs twinkle, Nick. He's got the butt-end of a mile the start on us, and the railroad cuts through that town."

The boy and the dog emulated each other in the speed with which they ran across the fields. Pete went over the fences at a flying leap while Nicodemus shied under them. There were no obstacles to them, and hedges were passed without a pause.

Yet, ere they had advanced a quarter of a mile, a shrill sound struck Pete's ear with ominous meaning.

"I'll be fiddled to death if there ain't a train comin'," he ejaculated, "and the cute skunk will catch it."

A brook, eight feet from bank to bank, cut the field before him.

Pete, doubled up like a ball, went over it at full run. Nicodemus was at his heels ere he had taken ten steps beyond.

"Lay out, Nick! Lay out!" yelled Pete, with what breath he had left. "We're runnin' a race with the injuns. If you don't beat it I'll sell you. Lay out, little animal!"

Their progress was very rapid, but the long line of smoke to the left was approaching with alarming speed.

In a minute more the thunder of the wheels on the bridge that crossed the creek was heard, and the iron front of the locomotive broke into view through the line of trees that bordered the stream.

The pursuers had now struck the road and were able to advance even more rapidly. But there was yet nearly half a mile before them, and the roaring and rattling train was flying forward.

It rolled up into the village, coming to a quick stop at the station which lay full within Pete's vision.

The boy strained his muscles to their uttermost and ran on faster than he had ever run before.

He was within two minutes' run of the depot when the iron horse slowly emerged from behind the building, and passed with a stately motion before his eyes, gathering speed with every revolution of the wheels.

Pete ran on, hoping to be able to gain the hindmost car. But, as the car passed before his eyes, the rear car emerged and rolled rapidly on, its iron railing just beyond the reach of Pete's outstretched hand.

The boy stumbled and fell across the track, utterly exhausted by his excessive exertion. Nicodemus halted beside him, violently panting.

"Well, that's a narrow squeeze," said a man on the platform. "The boy ought to have caught the train, the way he ran for it. Never mind, my lad, there will be another in a couple of hours."

Pete rose to his feet gasping violently. He was too short of breath to speak, and this was the only way he could give vent to his excited feelings. A couple of hours! It might as well have been a couple of years.

The men on the platform laughed at his movements. This added anger to his excitement, and it was some five minutes before he could gather breath and composure to speak.

The train was already beyond sight and hearing in the distance.

"Don't tell you?" he screamed out, at length. "Don't I tell you he's aboard that train? And you all standin' here like stones!"

He seemed to imagine that he had been expressing his feelings in words.

"Who is aboard the train?" asked the man who had spoken.

"Why, he is, the blasted, thunderin' rascal! Ain't none of you goin' to do nothin'! After I've run a mile, too?"

"Have you lost your senses, boy?" said another man. "Who are you talking about?"

"Why, the kurnel! Kurnel Green, ain't I tellin' you! If I'd cotched that train wouldn't I have settled him!"

"Colonel Green? I know him. What do you want with Colonel Green?"

"Ain't he aboard that train?"

"Yes. He got on at the station here."

"I knowed it! I knowed it! He's got to be cotched. Ain't there a telegraph here? We've got to send thunder and lightning after him."

"Blame your thick wife!" cried the man, catching Pete by the shoulder and shaking him roughly. "What ails you, anyhow? What's the matter with Colonel Green?"

A low, savage bark at his heels from Nicodemus forced him to relinquish his hold of the boy's shoulder.

The shake had done Pete good, however. His scattered senses returned to him, and he saw how wildly he had been acting in his excitement.

"Well, I'm blamed if this ain't gay!" he said. "Lost my brains for a minute, but Picayune Pete's hisself ag'in. If you're in Toledo an hour from now you'll know what the kurnel's done."

"We will know now if you are able to tell us," said the man.

"You all know 'bout Minnie Ellis bein' stole, and how there's five thousand on the head of the thief."

"Yes! yes!" cried a half-dozen voices, in sudden excitement.

"There he goes, in that train; slipped through your fingers like a greased eel. Blame him, if I'd only cotched him!"

"Colonel Green?" was eagerly asked.

"That's your boss, for a pile of pumpkins. I tell you the gal's found, and I'm the coon that done it. Where's the telegraph? Send word on to grab him at the next station."

"There's no telegraph here," said one of the station hands. "Can't send a message short of Toledo."

"How soon will a train be along up the road?" asked the first speaker.

"In fifteen minutes,"

"Then the dog and the dog are two deadheads to Toledo, sure," said Pete.

The time of waiting for the train was spent by Pete in detailing his adventures to a small circle of eager listeners.

It rattled up to the station on time, and he and the dog, with nearly all present, got on board, and were borne swiftly off toward the city.

At almost the same minute the sloop, Mary Jane, sailed gracefully up to her wharf in the city, decorated with a dozen flags, which the captain and some of her crew were hunting up.

The throng along the wharves looked with surprise on this unwonted display. In ten minutes more the surprise was exchanged to an excitement that ran like wildfire through the city.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 355.)

MY SYMPTOMS.

BY CHAS. MORRIS.

When my Maria heaves in sight
There comes at once the queerest feeling,
A sort of second-hand delight
Across my face and fingers stealing;
My heart, unbidden, jumps up and down,
A pit-a-paty sort of motion;
I feel just like a hack in such a notion.

You've felt it all, I should suppose;
Across your eyes a dimness coming,
A cold sweat running down your nose,
And in your ears a kind of humming;
Your tongue forgets its parts of speech,
And drops into a feeble stutter;
Ah! teach me, some good fellow, teach
What puts my heart in such a flutter!

Her eyes are black as any alone,
And bright—the stars themselves not brighter;
Her lips confound the crimson rose,
Her cheeks that water-lilies whiter;
Her voice is full of tender tones,
So musical, divine, elastic;
I have something got into my bones
That makes me so enthusiastic!

Will some one tell me what is loose
Inside of my organization?
I'm so inclined to play the goose
To gain Maria's approbation.
Her smile is like the morning sun,
Her frown is gloom unprecedented;
I'm not for sale, but 'twould be fun
If I to her could just be rented!

A diagnosis some one make,
And quickly, of my deep affliction;
Your physic I'll be glad to take,
And pay you—with my benediction!
I know it is some queer disease,
I freeze, I quake, I burn with fire;
Good doctor, give me, if you please,
Something to cure me of Maria.

SURE-SHOT SETH.

The Boy Rifleman.

OR,

THE YOUNG PATRIOTS OF THE NORTH.

BY OLL COOMES.

AUTHOR OF "IDAHO TOM," "RED BOB," "DAKOTA DAN," "OLD DAN RACKRACK," ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

WAS IT THE SHOT OF AN ASSASSIN?

A RIFLE-SHOT rang suddenly through the forest, starting Seth and Maggie with sudden fear. The report was followed by a groan, and that groan was the cry of a man in pain.

Seth had not a single doubt; for the look the young villain, Hawk-Eyes, gave him when he turned to the stream, meant mischief.

"I am afraid," said Seth, "that they have murdered a poor fellow. For they quarreled with him, and he left them."

"If Hawk-Eyes is Ivan Le Clercq, as you say, he will not hesitate to do anything," replied Maggie. "Why are you afraid they have killed Abe Thorne?"

Seth briefly narrated all that he had heard at the camp-fire conference.

Scarcely had he concluded, ere a peculiar cry rang forth upon the air—a cry that sent a smile of recognition over his young face. Then, from different quarters, came the voices of the boys, half a dozen answering cries, plain and distinct.

"Ah! my friends, the Boy Brigade, are near," said Seth.

A fierce, savage yell rang through the forest, then the sharp, stinging report of a rifle followed only to be succeeded by other shots fired in rapid succession.

The boy conspirators started to their feet, and, like so many frightened deer, bounded away into the woods; while Hawk-Eyes turned and crept through the shadows in the direction whence the sounds of conflict came.

"Maggie," said Seth, "my friends are near and engaged with the savages. You will be safe here for a while, and I will go to their assistance; but return to you, soon. If we succeed in defeating the foe, our escape will be certain."

"Go, Seth, to your friends' assistance. I will await your return," said the brave little maiden.

Seth crept away through the woods, and soon came in sight of the combatants. He placed a whistle to his lips and blew a sharp blast upon it. Instantly, from different quarters, rose the answering cry of the Boy Brigade.

A savage yell answered the latter. A deep hollow divided the foe, who were concealed in the timber that crowned the summits of the bluffs. But not a friend or foe could Seth see. He could see, however, a little cloud of smoke puff up from behind a tree, now and then, telling him where the combatants were.

His rifle was well under cover, he moved on toward his Brigade.

"Ho-ate that!" suddenly exclaimed a voice overhead.

Seth looked up and saw Joyful Jim, the trader, perched upon a pine limb. He had a gun in his hand, and across his forehead was a long wound or abrasion, from which a little rivulet of blood was running down each side of his face. The body of the tree screened him from Indian bullets.

"Why, Jim?" exclaimed Seth, "what are you doing up there?"

"Punchin' red-skins, Seth," was the laconic reply.

"It seems to me they've been stripping your head."

"Yes, the 'tarnal sulphurians knocked the bark off my frontispiece, and sprung a leak in my system. Gallons of the best blood, unadulterated with cold water, have evaporated, but it'll soon return in a copious shower to replenish and fructify the earth."

"My old friend," said Seth, "a red-skin 'll get sight of you, first thing you know, and put a bullet through your system."

"I'll risk it, Seth; besides, I'm up here where I can see 'em all, and warn the boys. Oh, I tell ye, it's a de-lightful sport. Seth—this injun fightin'! I used to furnish the 'tarnal smoky-skinned sulphurians their spirits; now, by a little tapping process with powder and lead, I extract their spirits. Don't you perceive the difference with half an eye?"

"Do you know the force of the enemy?" asked Seth.

"Know nothin'; you can't count snakes that are in their holes. But I opine there's quite a number of 'em sayin' 'I'll million or less of the superabundant varmints."

"Are the boys all about yet?"

"Yes; and perambulating red-skins over the Jordan at a lively rate. I tell ye, Seth, your Boy Brigade are a reg'lar set of young squackers on the shoot. But, looky here, whar's that gal?"

"Safe for the time being," answered Seth.

"Good," ejaculated Joyful Jim; then, having

capped his rifle, he began peering cautiously around the tree for a red-skin; but before he had the chance of a second shot, a fierce yell rose in the rear, starting both with a shudder of terror.

"Planked, by the New Jerusalem!" exclaimed old Jim, turning and glancing toward the horde swarming through the woods upon them.

Seth took to his heels, fleeing in the direction of his friends.

The savages on the opposite bluff charged from that direction.

Joyful Jim started down the tree, but he saw at a glance that he could not escape the foe, and so changed his notion and climbed higher among the branches in hopes the savages would not discover him.

Sure Shot Seth soon came to where his friend, the Yeager, was, and together the two ran on toward the valley. Others of the Brigade fell in with them, and by the time they had gone fifty rods, the whole of the band, including Maggie Harris' father and Tom Grayson, had joined them.

The Indians, now to the number of nearly a hundred, were in pursuit of them. Sure Shot Seth led the way toward the precipitous bluff that overhung the head of the valley, and which he knew to be honeycombed with numerous caverns and subterranean passages where one might elude an enemy with ease.

To reach the mouth of one of those passages required but a few moments, and no sooner were they under cover than all turned and poured a deadly volley into the ranks of the advancing enemy. A number of the latter fell; but their death only served to madden their surviving friends, who, like demons, came on toward the cavern, determined on exterminating the band of whites.

That the savages were ignorant of the advantage of which their friends had availed themselves, was evident from the incautious manner in which they approached. The Brigade fell back a few paces from the entrance, and, facing about, waited until the foe came up, when from the caverns a deadly hail of bullets was poured upon their withering volley. This caused the enemy to retreat with a full knowledge of the situation, and, for the time being, all relapsed into silence.

"Well, here we are cooped up like so many fowls," said Justin Gray, "and are likely to remain so for a while."

"Night let us out," said Hoosah, the Indian lad.

"Och! and it's meself knows what will let us out without a doubt," remarked Teddy O'Roop. "The 'tarnal critter came aloft on air wing and floundered in the water, and so I advised him for the life of me, to let me out, and so I did it, and expected 'em to up and bore me right through; but instead, they invited me down. In course, I war gentleman enough to accept of their request, and begun my descent. The good Lord only knows the thousands and thousands of things that darted through my mind as I climbed down that tree; and one thing that did dart I remember very well. It war a big, healthy hornit with a javelin like a harpoon. The 'tarnal critter came aloft on air wing and floundered in the water, and so I advised him for the life of me, to let me out, and so I did it, and expected 'em to up and bore me right through; but instead, they invited me down. In course, I war gentleman enough to accept of their request, and begun my descent. 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the still placid waters of the bay. Upon the bosom of the latter rested a strange-looking craft, resembling the long, narrow roof of a house with gables. A door opened in the side of this roof-like structure, and in front of it sat two persons, an old man and a young girl.

The former sat with his face buried in his hands, apparently absorbed in deep reverie; while the maiden, with snowy fingers flashing over the strings of a Spanish harp, called forth those wild, weird strains of celestial music.

CHAPTER XX.

PALACE OF OLD NEPTUNE.

ENCANTED by the music and startled by the scene, Maggie Harris stood silent and motionless, listening to the one and studying the other. The player was a young and beautiful girl, possibly not over eighteen years of age. Her rare loveliness, her sylph-like form, her queenly grace, and air of high-born accomplishments contrasted strangely with the surrounding scene. Her eyes were of a soft brown, large and lustrous, and full of tenderness and love. She was robed in a gown of misty blue with a white collar around the snowy neck. Her golden hair hung like silken floss down her back. A tiny, golden clasp at the throat, and a modest little rose in the hair were the only ornaments the fair creature wore. She sat near the old man, her very attitude, the poise of the head, and the manner in which she held her harp, all were positions of exquisite grace and ease.

The man was upward of sixty years of age, and in type and dress the personification of old Neptune. His face, his beard, his hair, and even his trident spear, bore a striking resemblance to those of the God of the Sea. His brow was the contracted furrows of care and deep thought. By his side lay some mechanical contrivance, consisting of wheels, rods and shafts of copper; and by these sat a kit of tools, such as would only be used by a master mechanic.

The craft upon which these two mysterious people were seated was as odd as it was ingenious. It was about twenty feet long by ten in width, and sloped gradually from the water to a point like the comb of a house-roof, though it was plainly evident that some portion of its square was submerged. The whole was plated with galvanized sheet-iron which gave it a white, clouded color. On the top were four small tubes resembling chimneys, though it was not possible that all were used as such. Maggie regarded the strange sight for some time with speechless emotion. She had often heard of Lake Luster and the foreboding solitude that surrounded it; but never had she heard of these people, who had, from all appearances, dwelt there for some time. She scarcely knew whether to consider them friends or foes. There was something in the stern looks of the old man and the desolate repose that surrounded his habitation, that made her doubtful of his character. But, the fair and lovely creature at his side—innocence, womanly love and kindness were written upon every feature of her face; and in the strains that floated out from the harp, and the accompaniment of a sweet and holy spirit.

While the fugitive maiden stood undecided as to the course she should pursue, the old man started up, seized his trident and thrust it into the water. A smile overspread his face—a smile that drove away all those hard lines and relieved the fears of Maggie Harris. As the old man drew back his spear, our heroine saw a large fish impaled upon it, struggling in the grasp of the terrible bars.

Releasing the fish, and securing it from escape, the old man again relaxed into silence, while the maiden continued at the harp. Five minutes, perhaps, had passed, when he again threw his spear and drew in a second fish. While he was releasing it, the maiden ceased playing, and, walking to the old man, said:

"Oh, what a nice fish, father! The two will be ample for our want for a day or two. The poor thing, how it struggles. It seems a pity to kill them, after having enticed them here by the enchantment of music."

"God has placed the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea at our command; and we have only to take them when our needs demand them. A slice of venison, or a roasted fowl, would be a welcome change at our table; but these are perilous times, and the report of a rifle might guide enemies to our retreat."

"Enemies! what enemies have we, father?" questioned the maiden.

"There's no telling; the savages will doubtless regard all whites who do not join their ranks as enemies; and, if so, we will be in danger, for I will never bear arms against my countrymen."

"Why not observe a strict neutrality, father?"

"This would be impossible with the red-skins. They have no knowledge, in their savage ignorance, of civilized warfare; and we could not convince them that, as neutrals, we had any rights they were bound to respect."

"Why not quit Lake Luster till peace is restored, father?"

"I could not think of it, Vishnia; especially, while upon the eve of success in my scheme, that must give me fame and wealth through all ages to come."

"But, father, if there is a war between the North and South, the sale of your self-propelling, self-acting torpedo may give you both fame and wealth. Now would be a good time to introduce your invention."

"Not very, daughter. The war between the North and South will not be a naval war. It will be principally on land," the old man replied.

"At any rate, why waste more of your life over a project that you may never achieve, and which has ruined the life and mind of many a wise genius?"

Maggie heard all this conversation, and was not a little surprised. She saw that the old man had secluded himself there to work out in secret the completion of some grand scheme, and that he had heard and read of such self-annihilation before, on the part of wise men, for the furtherance of science. But, such great sacrifice had been unrecalled for, and was usually attended with an overwrought imagination. In the subdued light of the old man's eyes, his hair, and his snowy temples, she could see the presence of a partially-clouded mind. His conversation revealed this, and Maggie had resolved not to intrude upon the privacy of his beloved schemes, and was about to turn away when she heard a rustle in the shrubbery to her right. Turning her eyes, she beheld a clump of bushes carefully parted, and a painted savage face appear in the opening.

A cry rose to her lips, and like a deer she darted over her concealment and ran toward the water. She had gone but a few paces, however, when the savage overtook her. He grasped her by the arm and arrested her flight; then he lifted her in his naked, brawny arms and turned to flee. But, before he had taken a dozen steps, something struck him in the back with a dull thud. A gasp escaped his lips, and with a convulsive quiver running through his whole form, he sunk heavily to the earth, falling across the unconscious form of Maggie.

A massive footstep approached from the lake, and the tall form of the mysterious old man of Lake Luster stood by the side of the dead warrior and the helpless maiden. He seized the body of the fallen man and hurried him aside, then from the body he withdrew his barbed spear, lifted Maggie in his strong arms and carried her aboard his boat. Scarcely had he done so when a fierce, savage yell burst upon the air, and a score of savages rushed from the woods toavenge their fallen comrade. But, before they could reach the water's edge, the boat was put in motion by some invisible means.

The savages fired at the craft, but their bullets glanced from the metal covering of its structure like hail from a stone wall; and, in a few moments more, it was even beyond rifle-range, out upon the bosom of Lake Luster.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 353.)

INDUSTRY IS WEALTH.

THE FROZEN RAIN.

BY M. A. WARNER.

What magic scene is this that greets my raptured vision,
Have the angels left their homes and come to bless us for a day?
Have they brought these robes of beauty, from their bright and fair Elysium,
To make glad the hearts of mortals, and to cheer them on the way?

See the trees, all decked in jewels, like unnumbered tapers lighted,
Gleam like rubies, opals, diamonds, in the clear and frosty air!
Every shrub is clothed in beauty, nor have meanest weeds been slighted,
But all alike shine forth, in radiance rich and rare.

Would that I could read the lesson shadowed forth in all this whiteness—
Read a lesson, that, if true, would fill all hearts with untold bliss,
That we each and every one at last should share a home of brightness,
And forget all sins and sorrow that had troubled us in this.

Oh, our Father! may I trust that Thy care for erring mortals
In love hath sent a lesson, thus for human hearts to think;
Shall we each and every one at last, pass through the golden portals,
And form one glorious chain, without a missing link?

Adrift on the Prairie:

OR,
THE ADVENTURES OF FUR YOUNG N' MRODS.

BY OLL COOMES.

X—A GRAND SPECTACLE—OUR RETURN TO SWAN LAKE.

ONE can but faintly imagine our feelings when started from a sweet, pleasant slumber by Uncle Lige's excited words informing us that we were doomed to a fearful death. We quickly arose and dressing ourselves hurried outside, where a sight that paralyzed us with horror met our gaze. The prairie was on fire! Around us on all sides was a wall of red, glaring flames. The slough to our right and the slough to our left, and the plain before and behind us were one seething mass of roaring, hissing fire, the closest wall being scarcely over a mile from us.

We knew the minute we saw the situation that Uncle Lige had been sleeping on his post, else he would have discovered the fire ere our lives were endangered. He was afraid of prairie fire, and it was to guard against this danger that he had made him so anxious to keep watch; and yet he had let the seductive goddess Sleep woo him from his vigils while his worst fears were being realized. This he frankly admitted without fear.

"But how come the plain and swamps on fire?" we questioned, feeling not a little mystified that the fire should be all around us, instead of being upon one side.

"It's been them infernal Indians, I expect; and they've fixed it all around in hopes of gittin' the game inside already roasted. It's one of their ornery tricks to kill game by fire—burn it to death. They're too lazy to hunt and shoot it. But, boys, we must try to save our lives."

"What can we do?" was the question that passed from lip to lip. There was such a fascinating horror in the awful scene that we could not turn our eyes from it. A continuous roar that seemed to tremble through the night like the jarring sound of distant thunder smote our ears. The flames, feeding upon the tall dry reeds in the swamps, shot heavenward like monstrous serpent tongues, licking and lapping at the clouds. The blue sky and its starry hosts were blotted from view by the dense, black smoke. A dome of awful darkness hung over a wall of living flames, surrounded us, and laid up the scene with a white, garish light that reddened our faces and ghastly, Jim's black mustache and imperial stood out in bold relief against a full, round face of snowy whiteness. Bob's brown beard and bronzed face looked hoary and wild; while George's black eyes looked transfixed by momentary fear. Our horses pricked up their ears and snorted uneasily. Uncle Lige's cattle bellowed with fright as they glared, with glassy eyes and white, ghostly horns, around them. And Ben, cowering under the wagon, lent an additional terror to the scene by a mournful, quivering howl.

"Boys! Boys!" called Uncle Lige, "come, come, we must get to work!"

His words broke the spell that bound us, and we at once realized that if we would save ourselves, we must be doing so as quickly as possible. We hurried forward to find out what was the trouble, but the mate angrily ordered them to their stations.

It was a terrible moment for us. The sound grew louder, but no sound appeared. Suddenly, a vivid flash struck across our bows and revealed the spars and hull of a large, heavy ship. She was steering west and almost under our bows. We were going in two knots, and it seemed impossible to help collision.

"Braces, braces! Cast off to windward! Sharp up your yards! Down, hard down your helm, there, hard down!" Work with a will, men—My God—in with those braces, brace her sharp up. Down your helm quartermaster, hard down," the mate yelled in a stentorian voice.

The lightning came again; a cry of horror; the ships were close together. In a moment more we felt a terrible shock; there was a heavy strain—a crash—a grating noise, and a flash of lightning. By it we perceived the stranger upon our quarter.

Her main yard-arm had carried away our main top-gallant backstay. She was soon out of sight, although flash after flash illumined the water and sky.

Many an unused and fervent prayer ascended to heaven that awful night.

This little poem comes to us as the companion to the first fourteen. It is not only charming in sentiment, but is charmingly poetic. The author evidently possesses the poet's precious heritage.

SEEKING.

BY EUDORA MAY STONE.

I seek for violets, far and near;
The tall trees whisper to deride me.
I seek my lowly path, and here
The dainty darlings droop beside me.

Through all the world I seek, and ask
That fate and fortune may elude me.
I turn me to my lowly task,
And there does happiness await me.

Base-Ball.

BY HENRY CHADWICK.

THE LEAGUE CONVENTION.

THE association of the most wealthy of the stock-holding professional clubs, known as the National League of Professional Clubs, held their first annual convention on Dec. 7th, at the Kennard House, Cleveland, and the event proved to be one of special interest to the League clubs, and, in fact, to all the professional organizations to a certain extent. The experience of the past season plainly pointed out to the League that some of the legislation of their inaugural session was not calculated to be of advantage to them, and in one instance they have profited by the lesson the past season taught them, this being in the case of the abrogation of the rule admitting of the engagement of players during an existing season for an ensuing season's work. But they have failed to perceive the pecuniary loss involved in the retention of the fifty-cent tariff, and they have also failed to realize the importance and advantage of so amending their rules governing the membership of their association as to open its doors to every professional club which desires the protection the League affords to clubs in holding players to their con-

tracts and in preventing "crooked" work and "revolving."

The event of the Cleveland session was the expulsion of the Athletic and Mutual clubs from the Association. Expelling a club is the most severe penalty known to the League constitution. Its enforcement is called for whenever a club is found guilty of fraudulent play. In the case of these clubs, however, their violation of the League rules may be said to have been of a venial character, their fault being simply a failure to play a little over a fourth part of the quota of games assigned them; in other words, the two clubs had each to play seventy old games, and instead were only enabled to play in one case fifty-nine and in the other fifty-six. It appears from the record of the proceedings—sent us by Mr. MacMahon, of the Chicago Tribune, in a reporter allowed in the convention—that there was an incentive for the extreme action taken in the case of these two clubs which does not exactly accord with the sentiments contained in the second article of the League constitution.

The case in point was this: After the bankruptcy of the Athletics, Bradley, Anson and Baitin, who had been engaged by the Athletics for the season of 1877, found it to their interest to join other clubs, the two former signing with the Chicago club and the latter with St. Louis, this being done with the proviso of their obtaining their release from the Athletics. There were two methods of punishing the Athletic club; the one was by forfeiting the games they failed to play, and the other was by expelling them. The four Western clubs asked for their expulsion, and the St. Louis club individually requested that the played games be forfeited, so as to give them second position in the pennant race. To have applied the penalty of forfeiture would have been to have exempted the two clubs from expulsion, in which case the contracts with the three Western clubs would have been null and void—would have been held as valid. Being on the horns of this dilemma, the Board of Directors chose the way of escape which expulsion pointed out, and so St. Louis had to be content with third place and with getting Baitin back in their nine, the Chicago club being the result in getting Bradley and Anson for service.

Hence the infliction of the harsh penalty of expulsion from the League.

We find also that a new wording of a rule of the League applicable to the punishment of players for misconduct during the season upon the part of the club managers against the club players as to call for special comment. The rule in question is this:

"Any player who shall conspire with any person against the interest of his club, or by any conduct manifest a disposition to obstruct the management of his club, may be expelled. The club is entitled to the best services of the player, and if any player becomes indifferent or careless in his play, or from any cause becomes unable to render service satisfactory to his club, it may, at its option, refuse to pay salary for such time, or may cancel the contract of such player."

While this section may have the effect of urging players to use extra exertion in the discharge of their field duties, and also act as an obstacle to any operations known as "crooked work," it opens the door to an arbitrary control of each individual player to an extent which practically deprives him of any rights the clubs might otherwise be obliged to respect. In fact, it gives the power to a club to discharge any player of the club at any period of the season upon the slightest of pleas, as it will be very easy to bring his conduct under the category of "unsatisfactory service." The application of the new rule can be strikingly illustrated in the case of Borden, of the Boston team of 1876.

This player has been found a sort of costly elephant on the hands of the club, and all efforts to induce him to release the club from the responsibility of having to pay him his salary for three years, having failed through his prompt acquiescence in every duty given him to discharge, it became a problem how to rid the club of the pecuniary obligations his retention involved. The wording of this new rule does the business at once, and Borden may date his discharge from the Boston club from the hour this rule was adopted.

The new rule which the Convention adopted, which specially commends itself as a step in the right direction, and that is the rule which prohibits every league club from making any contract with an engaged player from March 15th to the close of the season, or to the time the club holding the player disbands. By this new rule of the Association—now adopted by a unanimous vote—after March 15th no League club can employ any player who is held to service by a written contract to any club, "in or out of the League." This does away with the custom in vogue last season of taking in players of co-operative clubs, without regard whether such players violated their agreements or not. This custom was a fruitful source of revolving in the semi-professional arena last season, and it was mainly due to the countenances given to the class of players anxious to get into League nine, by League club managers seeking to strengthen their teams.

The amendments to the playing rules do not involve any material change in the fundamental laws of the game. In brief they are as follows: The ball is of the same size, weight and material as that of 1876, viz.: nine and a quarter inches in circumference, five and a half ounces in weight, and composed of woolen yarn covered with leather, and containing the usual core of rubber. The League decided, however, to use only one kind of ball, and they selected the "regulation dead ball," made by Mahan of Boston. No match between League nine can now be legal unless played with a ball furnished by the League secretary, he procuring them in quantities from the appointed manufacturer.

The bases—with the exception of the home base—have been enlarged from one foot square to fifteen inches square. The home base has been changed from the position it occupied last year, and now is located within the lines of the diamond.

Besides the foul ball lines, lines are to be laid down parallel to the foul lines as a boundary line within which the batting side are not allowed to pass.

The batsman's position has been brought forward a foot, so that he can now stand three feet in front of the home base line instead of but two, as last season.

Base runners running from home to first base must keep on the base line. If they run outside of that line before reaching first base they are to be declared out. In returning on foul balls, too, they must run back. If they walk back they are to be given out.

If a base-runner in any way allows a batted ball to touch him he is to be declared out. He is now allowed to get behind a fielder to avoid obstructing him in fielding. If a ball is not held by a fielder when it is thrown to him to put out a base runner out—as is frequently the case in collisions—the runner is not out.

The pitching rules have not been changed, but the rule defining high and low balls has been reworded so as to make the belt of the player the boundary line. A ball not above the belt, and not below the knees are now "low balls," and all balls above the belt and not higher than the shoulder are high balls.

The Convention established a code of rules for the guidance of the scorers, mainly taken from the *Clippers*. The rule throwing out foul ball catches, advocated by Harry Wright, was not adopted, and the rule on this subject remains the same as last season. The new score will read as follows:

CHICAGO. T. R. B. R. P. O. A. E.
McVey, c. 5 4 0 2 5 5
Spalding, p. 6 4 2 4 3 3
Glenn, 1b. 5 3 5 3 8 0
Barnes, 2b. 5 7 5 7 1 1
Anson, 3b. 4 3 4 2 3 3
Peters, ss. 4 4 5 4 3 2
Brown, lf. 4 6 3 3 2 0
Hines, cf. 4 5 3 2 4 0
Bradley, r. 4 3 4 2 1 0

BOSTON. T. R. B. R. P. O. A. E.
White, c. 4 3 2 2 5 4
Burd, p. 4 3 2 2 5 4
Murnan, 1b. 5 4 3 4 8 1

West, 2b. 3 2 1 2 8 2
Sutton, 3b. 4 2 2 2 2 2
G. Wright, ss. 4 4 2 2 2 2
Leonard, lf. 4 3 3 1 0
O'Rourke, cf. 4 5 3 2 1 0
Brown, r. 4 3 2 1 0

33 30 22 22 27 12

The innings remain the same as before. The new method adds a column for successful base running, cleanly stolen bases counting now.

The records of put out and assisted are added together, for one act of fielding, on the average, is as creditable as the other.

In the selection of umpires, the new rule requires that each League club shall select three men as regular occupants of the position for the season, for the city in which the club is located, and that when a match takes place one of these three is to be chosen by lot to umpire the game.

The Convention very properly re-elected Mr. Young as their secretary.

A THOUSAND BOYS WANTED.—There are always boys enough in the market, but some of them are of little use. The kind that are always wanted are—

1. Honest. 6. Obedient.
2. Pure. 7. Steady.
3. Intelligent. 8. Obliging.
4. Active. 9. Polite.
5. Industrious. 10. Neat.

One thousand first-rate places are open for a thousand boys who come up to this reasonable standard.

Each boy can suit his taste as to the kind of business he would prefer. The places are ready in every kind of occupation.

Many of these places of trade and art are already filled by boys who lack some of the most important points, but they will soon be vacant.

One has an office where the lad who has the situation is losing his first point. He likes to attend the singing saloon and the theatre. This costs more money than he can afford, but somehow he manages to be there frequently.

His employers are quietly watching to learn how he gets so much spending money; they will soon discover a leak in the money drawer, detect the dishonest boy, and his place will be ready for some one who is now getting ready for it by observing point No. 1, and being truthful in his ways.

Some situations will soon be vacant because the boys have been poisoned by reading bad books, such as they would not dare to show their fathers, and would be ashamed to have their mothers see.

The impure thoughts suggested by these books will lead to vicious acts; the boys will be ruined, and their places must be filled.

Who will be ready for any of these vacancies? Distinguished lawyers, useful ministers, skillful physicians, successful merchants, must all soon leave their places for somebody else to fill. One by one they are removed by death.

Mind your ten points, boys; they will prepare you to step into vacancies in the front rank. Every man who is worthy to employ a boy is looking for you if you have these points.

Do not fear that you will be overlooked.

A few advertisements will be inserted on this page at the rate of fifty cents per line, nonpareil measurement.

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Beadle's Dime Hand-Books for Young People cover a wide range of subjects, and are especially adapted to their end. They constitute at once the cheapest and the most useful works yet put into the market for popular circulation.

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4. Comic Speaker. 13. School Speaker.
5. Elocutionist. 14. Liederer Speaker.
6. Humorous Speaker. 15. Komika Speaker.
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The above books are for sale by all newsdealers, or sent, post-paid, on receipt of price—ten cents each. BEADLE AND ADAMS, PUBLISHERS, 98 William Street, New York.

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A LOVER'S POEM.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

I love thee for thy sterling worth,
(Six thousand pounds doth she inherit.)
'Tis the best grounded love on earth,
(Three-quarter section farm, or near it.)
Oh, for the day I call me yours,
(She's got me now, I'm very sure.)
My hopes would fill the universe,
(I would be lost; they were fewer.)

I know of no one half so fair,
(She doesn't always dress as the fairy.)
Your kindness is so rich and rare,
(But she disposes of it rarely.)
Your smile is very dear and sweet,
(Save when on others she bestows it.)
My confidence in you is great,
(If Jones is there to-night there goes it.)

For what thing else can I ever strive?
(My landown'g press is in labor.)
On your affection do I live,
(And sometimes dine upon my neighbor.)
And daily upon you I dote,
(An antidote I greatly need, miss.)
I love you much and well you know it,
(About three times too much indeed, miss.)

How proud you'd wear the name of wife?
(Authority it gives, in cases of life.)
Your feet would follow mine through life,
(When theaters allure their pees.)
Future for you has much in store,
(A dry cow's milk, I can't mention.)
The lighter thoughts of yours are o'er,
(It's golden ore claims her attention.)

The stamp of beauty is thine own,
(A thousand dollar bill she carries.)
Thou hast you love in thine own,
(But how about the man she marries?)
I take your hand, I call it mine,
(When e'er I hand it to the carriage.)
Although I feel that I am thine,
(I fear 'twill be so after marriage.)

Great Captains.

BLAKE.

"The Father of the English Navy."

BY DR. LOUIS LEGRAND.

In Admiral Blake we have a signal instance of "natural bent of genius." With none of that preliminary service or experience which naval commanders deem essential to success, and with no knowledge of the art of war save what was obtained by a comparatively brief training in the Parliamentary army, he stepped aboard the channel fleet, in 1649, to become renowned in a season. As his "master," Oliver Cromwell, sprung from the people, unheralded, to lead the Parliamentary forces to victory, so Blake came from the people to set aside all "royalty" in the sea service, and to make a new race of heroes out of the plebeian blood that gave "the Commonwealth" its life.

Robert Blake, eldest son of a merchant, was born at Bridgewater, England, the year 1599. He received what was then termed "good schooling," and lived as a "gentleman" upon the means inherited from his father. As a representative of the trades interests of Bridgewater, he was sent to Parliament, in 1640. But Parliament and Charles I. were then at loggerheads. The king, following the precedents of arrogance, extravagance and encroachments on constitutional rights set by his father, James I., tried to force the House of Commons to disburse the expenses, in sustaining an absurd policy; the Commons resisted stubbornly; Charles dissolved that Parliament, as he had done several others which had preceded, and the breach between the Royalists and Parliamentary men both widened and deepened.

Blake, having formally embraced "Puritan" views, found himself arrayed against royalty, from antagonism to its assumed prerogatives, and from religious or anti-state church convictions; so that, although of course he was to sustain his authority, and Parliament met for force, Blake very naturally drifted into the Parliamentary army. The great civil war that ensued enlisted all classes. It was a struggle of the Commons and the people against Royalty and Nobility, and of course aroused the keenest partisanship. Families, neighbors, communities divided on the issue. Charles found hearty supporters, and retainers enough to make up a formidable army, while his nephew, Prince Rupert, of Bavaria, brought to his uncle's aid the bodies of Germans, and his father-in-law, the King of France, gave liberal material aid in arms, munitions and money. Europe, indeed, looked upon the contest with the liveliest interest, for kings, ministers and nobility saw in the struggle a principle that, if successful, might give courage to the people of all western Europe to make a struggle for constitutional liberty.

Blake was in Bristol, under Col. Piennes, when that city surrendered to Prince Rupert, and was one of the leaders in the enterprise against Taunton, of which city he was made governor. In 1645 he defended it against the royal forces under Goring, with such pertinacity as to twice repulse assaults and to successfully hold out against siege—a service that elicited the thanks of Parliament and a reward of honor.

Prince Rupert, though brave, was impetuous, rash, and lacking in military art. As chief of the royal cavalry, he lost the royalists the great battle on Marston Moor (July, 1644). Subsequently he surrendered Bristol to the conquering Parliamentary arms. Charles was then forced to deprive him of command on land, so assigned him to a fleet which his friends largely contributed to equip. It comprised a number of the best ships of the old navy, and was relied on, by the royalists, to keep the seaport towns in subjection.

But, the cause of Charles having perished by his trial and beheading (January, 1649), left Rupert as the chief representative of the royalists, who now looked to the success of Charles II.—a design that Cromwell had to dread, for, having been chiefly instrumental in calling Charles I. to trial, he was master of the situation by his death, and he proposed to see royalty restored in the son of Charles I. So he planned to rid the popular party of this danger. A Parliamentary fleet was organized in 1649-50, largely made up of merchant ships, and to this fleet three army officers were detailed in the command—Colonels Blake, Deane and Popham, not one of whom had seen proper naval service. The Prince's fleet was then in Kinsale harbor, Ireland. Thither Blake sailed, and blockaded the royal navy. Early in 1651 the Prince succeeded in getting his fleet out, but being pursued by Blake, took refuge in Lisbon, Portugal—then a neutral port. Blake quickly appeared off the harbor, but was refused permission to run up the Tagus to attack. He resented this by capturing a number of rich merchantmen. Parliament sustained this act of war by declaring hostilities against Portugal.

Taking advantage of Blake's temporary disappearance from the mouth of the Tagus, the Prince ran from Lisbon to Malaga, Spain. Blake now asked to permission of the Spanish authorities, but ran into the port and immediately attacked the royal fleet. After a fierce but short fight he destroyed nearly all the Prince's vessels, and, with no apology to Spain for the outrage, sailed away for the Thames. For this he was made "Warden of the Cinque Ports," and with his fleet suppressed all royal authority in the English Channel islands.

In 1652, war with the Dutch was declared; Blake was made sole Admiral of the Channel fleet. Von Tromp, the noted Dutch admiral, was sent to destroy him. The fleets, about equally matched, met in the Downs. The Hollander, pursuing his usual mode of attack, ran down to the English line, through and through, but in an hour's time drew off, much the worse for his adventure. He found that he was something else to fight than Spanish conceit and dazzling uniforms.

Blake struck back by capturing Dutch fishing-smacks and a merchantman or two; so Von Tromp put out to engage the adventurous Englishman again, but a storm dispersed the fleets, and the Dutch returned to port.

These failures incensed the Holland government, and Von Tromp was displaced by De Ruyter, but that old "sea-dog" did not venture out, and Von Tromp again assumed command, came upon Blake, Nov. 29th, off the Goodwin Sands. The Englishman, outwighed in guns and outnumbered in ships, was forced, with a loss of five of his best vessels, to retire into the Thames. Von Tromp celebrated his victory by affixing brooms at his masthead and sailing up and down the Channel. He returned to Amsterdam to receive the thanks of the States-General, while the English went to work to organize a fleet that would take that broom off the Dutchman's mast, as well as destroy Holland's supremacy on the North Sea.

In February, 1653, Blake was ready with eighty sail. The Dutch, too, had been busy, and Von Tromp and De Ruyter were then skurrying the Channel with seventy sail, and conveying a great fleet of Hollander merchantmen coming in from the south. Blake met this convoy off Cape la Hague, and then ensued one of the most prolonged and obstinate naval battles on record. For three days the antagonists fought—the Dutch to save their convoy and themselves, the English to capture the rich East Indian and to destroy the enemy's vessels. Blake had with him Deane and the famous General Monk (Duke of Albemarle). After three days' fighting the Dutch succeeded in getting off, with a loss of eleven vessels of war and thirty of their convoy—under the circumstances a success greatly to their honor. Blake lost but one ship.

In April of this year (1653) Oliver Cromwell made his coup and obtained possession of the Government. He had met the Dutch fleet to champion the people's cause, and by his wonderful display of military and executive ability had so won the mastery of the popular or Parliamentary cause as to be able, at the time named, to plant himself in the King's seat—a king under the thin guise of another title—that of Protector of the Commonwealth. The three admirals, in deference to what appeared to be the popular wish, assented to this assumption of supreme power. "It is not for us," said Blake, "to mind the affairs of the state, but to keep the sea free from fooling us." And this was the keynote of his conduct. He fought for the honor of England, and it mattered little whether Cromwell or Parliament ordered.

June 3d Von Tromp and De Ruyter sought the English fleet in and off Newport, met the ships of Monk, Deane and Lawson—all under general command of Blake. The first day's fight was indecisive. On the second day the combat was renewed and the Dutch were defeated, and Von Tromp was killed. The English lost three ships, but the Dutch lost a considerable loss. They no longer carried the broom.

Cromwell received Blake with marked demonstrations of approval, for that fight off the Forth had given the English a supremacy on the high seas and thus greatly strengthened the Commonwealth. As a result of this victory, the Commonwealth was returned as member of Parliament from Bridgewater, but sat out only part of the session. Cromwell, then virtually exercising supreme power, resolved upon making the English fleet a permanent and powerful force.

He therefore equipped a powerful fleet, and giving Blake command the admiral sailed for Algiers, whose Bey he forced to salute the flag. Proceeding to Tunis he made imperative demands of the Bey for the release of all English captives—a considerable number of whom were held as slaves to the insolent Moor. The Bey refused Blake's demands; whereupon the admiral proceeded to demolish the forts or castles of Goletta and Porto Ferro, by a bombardment that gave the Mohammedan tyrant a wholesome dread of that "Christian dog."

A section of his fleet, under Captain Stayer, had blockaded Cadiz, Spain—the chief port of entry of the West India "plate" fleets that bore to Spain the treasure won from the wrecked and inhabitants of Mexico, South America and the West Indies. Into Spanish coffers was then flowing a steady stream of wealth—almost every ounce of which represented the blood and suffering of the conquered races. Stayer caught one of these fleets coming in under convoy, and after a brief battle took the two galleons and their escort—a ship-of-war, having on board a Spanish admiral and vice-admiral.

Learning that another fleet had put into the port of Santa Cruz, Blake went on to Santa Cruz, and the Spanish vessels were under the protection of its powerful forts, fleet and treasure were thought to be safe, but Blake, taking twenty-four ships, resolved to destroy the escort and convoy. Arriving at Santa Cruz, he sailed directly into the harbor and ran down on the ships so closely that the land forts could not fire on him without also injuring the Spanish vessels. Having arranged "fire-baskets," he dropped them on the Spaniards' decks as he sailed by, and ere he left the harbor saw the whole fleet in flames. The Spaniards were literally slaughtered on their decks by the terrible broadsides, and the conflagration that followed consummated a victory that made Blake's name a literal sea terror.

His receipt of honors on his return, was enthusiastic. Even Puritan stoicism unbent at the coming of one who, in a two years' cruise, had made a first-class power tremble at the British name, and had exalted the British navy to a position never before attained. Parliament honored him with a coronation vote that the land forces could not fire on him without also injuring the Spanish vessels. Having arranged "fire-baskets," he dropped them on the Spaniards' decks as he sailed by, and ere he left the harbor saw the whole fleet in flames. The Spaniards were literally slaughtered on their decks by the terrible broadsides, and the conflagration that followed consummated a victory that made Blake's name a literal sea terror.

Blake returned to Cadiz, which his fleet still blockaded, but the climate he had lately been serving in, and the arduous nature of the services he had been performing for five years, had greatly affected his health. He began to break so rapidly when he arrived off Cadiz (July, 1657), that his flag-ship turned homeward in August, but he died as the ship was entering the port of Plymouth, August 27th, 1657.

The great admiral's death was followed by the grandest funeral ever held in England. Westminster Abbey, in Henry VII.'s chapel; but, with pitiful indecency, when Charles II. came to the throne, one of the earliest acts of royalty was to remove the remains from the Abbey and their burial, without ceremony, in the humble graveyard of St. Margaret's church, where they still repose.

Cromwell had been growing moody and tired of power for a year, when the admiral's death was announced. It affected him greatly; he never was his old, bold, adventurous self, and he specially loved Blake, he saw in his death "a warning," and he died in a year and a week from the admiral's decease.

Blake died very poor. What he earned he spent freely among his men; the little fortune left him by his father was consumed in the civil war. His brilliant captures from the Dutch and Spanish, that should have enriched him with prize-money, he also gave away among his officers and crew. By such consideration for the interests of the crew, as well as his superior discipline, his mastery leadership and his almost sublime devotion to country, did he, in seven years, lift the British naval service from a lowly to a lofty position, and from his day laid the basis of the greatness of Britain on the seas, which made her one of the greatest of modern military powers.

Cupid and House-Cleaning.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

MR. WALTER AMMIDON laid his knife and fork down with a gesture of absolute despair.

"Not going to clean house again, Mrs. Benedict? Why, it seems as if we had only recovered from the dreadful tearing up process of last spring."

Mrs. Benedict slowly dropped four lumps of sugar into his coffee, then handed it to him, utterly regardless of the misery in his face.

"Dreadful tearing up!—that's perfect nonsense, Mr. Ammidon! As if you were very much concerned in it! May while the carpets were up and the shutters off and the curtains down and the painting going on! Of course I shall clean this fall; it's my habit, and has been for twenty odd years."

Mr. Ammidon gave a little groan at the sad fate that awaited him—that awaited all bachelors in boarding-houses—in the shape of several consecutive days of bare floors, and the odor of soap and kalsomine; of cold dinners eaten wherever it was convenient to set the dining-table; of Mrs. Benedict in a chronic state of bustle and crossness, and the servants impudent, tired and sulky; of wide open doors and windows where the draughts tore through like fiends—of pandemonium generally.

And a gentleman, however, Mr. Ammidon was, and so repressed his ill-temper and disgust, and mental maledictions that house-cleaning was a purely malicious instigation of his Satanic majesty for the torment of mankind.

It was a gloomy and dreary day, and Mrs. Benedict went to, with horrible cheerfulness, as she dished the dessert, "and I've been thinking that I'll have your room newly papered, Mr. Ammidon. I'm sure you'll like that?"

Very much—when it's done, madam. No objection, thank you.

And he cut his dinner short and rushed out of doors into the cool, fresh October evening air. "Ah! bah! I can already experience the agonies of last spring. Good heavens, the woman who makes me eat out of the dining-table, and who has no wonder her husband has suffered two attacks of house-cleaning a year, and I shall die, or grow crazy unless I leave her—but I suppose all women are equally idiotic."

A groan of genuine misery broke from his lips as he strode along, his hat jammed over his eyes—very unlike the handsome gentleman he really was, with his frank, cheery face and pleasant mouth with the white, even teeth, and the half-closed, thick-lashed eyes, and the grave, intelligent air that nothing could ruffle as the idea of Mrs. Benedict's semi-annual "tearing-up"—a courteous, refined, genial gentleman, whom society found a puzzle because of his persistent bachelorhood, when it knew of at least a half-dozen other things that were going on in his mind. It was the faintest chance of an offer of marriage from him—who himself wondered why he never had managed to fall in love—and who pretty little Mrs. Baldwin, the blue-eyed, blonde-haired widow, with no encouragement, a house of her own, and a fortune of some thousands a year, often felt quite piqued with, that he was so very unimpressible.

So Mr. Ammidon strode along, almost mechanically turning corners, his pace gradually growing slower, and then, all at once, he heard the brilliant tones of a piano as some skilled hands played the "Leo March," and, looking up, found himself in front of a warmly-lighted, cheery, hospitable house—the very house where Mrs. Benedict dwelt.

He looked at the picture of the way Mrs. Benedict's boarding-house would look the next day—the other of how Mrs. Baldwin's elegant little house would look that same day, and as it appeared now through the lace curtains—quiet, warm, hospitable, inviting.

And like a revelation from Heaven it came to him—an idea, a determination that was so strong, so restless, that he walked forthwith up the stairs to his room, and unlocked the door, and, wondering, as he did, why the music had ceased and where the player had gone.

"I'll marry her off-hand if she'll have me! And then we'll see how many times a year the house is cleaned; that is, if I can get it done." Then the door opened, and the maid invited him into the parlor, with the information that Mrs. Baldwin had just run into a neighbor's, by the side gate, but would be back directly, if the sick child was better she had gone to see.

Mr. Ammidon enquired himself into the easiest chair in the room—a great, deep, wide, cushioned affair that was drawn up by the little low table under the gas drop.

Bless her pretty blue eyes! Gone to see a sick child, what a lovely sight! What a blessing that it occurred to me to offer myself to such a good-hearted, cheerful, tender, fond little woman as she is, and what a miraculous lot I have been not to have done it long ago. Why, honey, I feel as if I had been in love with her all along, and I believe I have been, and never knew it!

His handsome head leaned comfortably against the cushions and his well-shaped, well-boiled feet were crossed on a low ottoman near the fire that burned brightly; his watch told ten, twenty, thirty minutes, and when she did not come at the expiration of three-quarters of an hour, Mr. Ammidon was conscious of a keen disappointment that astonished himself.

At all events, my object shall be accomplished, so far as I can accomplish it. He thought, and he took his gold and ivory pencil and wrote an ardent, courteous, undeniably eager statement of his case, asking her to be his loved wife, and begging an answer on the morrow, when she should be visiting Mrs. Benedict.

"I accidentally learned you would take tea with us to-morrow night," he wrote, "and I must know at once when I meet you if I am the lucky man who is to be your husband. I can look favorably on my suit, let me know by answering 'yes' to the first question I put to you. If it is otherwise, I will not trouble you further."

Then he signed himself suitably, put the folded letter in his pocket, and, looking at the top of a pile of newspapers and sheet music on the piano, and took his leave, in a strange whirl of excitement and expectation.

Half an hour later Mrs. Baldwin came in, stopping, as she passed the dining-room door, to speak to the great man.

"You carried all those papers and the music up to the attic, Ammie, as I told you?"

"The very minute the gentleman went away, Mrs. Baldwin. It was Mr. Ammidon, and he came to see me about his letter."

"Oh!—that's too bad that I was not in. Mrs. May's little Edith is very, very sick, Ammie."

And so Mrs. Baldwin never knew of the precious letter lying among bushels of waste scraps in the dark attic, as she sat there alone by the piano, thinking of the caller she had missed with genuine sorrow, and pale cheeks, and eyes full of disappointment—for pretty Mrs. Bessie, with her soft blue eyes, and rebelliously curly hair, and small, perfect figure, was more interested in the handsome bachelor than she cared to admit even to herself.

The next day, she dressed with unusual care for her afternoon's visit to Mrs. Benedict, wondering, as she basted the soft little ruching in the neck of her sleeveless velvet jacket, and adjusted the points of her black silk cravat, whether or not Mr. Ammidon would think she looked well, and whether, possibly, he might not escort her home.

So her eyes were dancing with radiant blue as she looked at her cheeks were flushing a most delicious pink rose hue, and her lovely mouth dimpling in bewitching smiles, when Mr. Ammidon came into the sitting-room, several minutes before the time for the dinner-bell to ring.

Mr. Ammidon, handsome man, she had ever seen him, in a dark suit, with a white shirt and tie, and his face so grandly intelligent and animated as he went up to her and offered her his hand, looking straight in her eyes as he spoke, very quietly, but with all his fate in his words—and she smiling, so conscious of her own beauty.

"I am very glad to see you, Mrs. Baldwin. Didn't you find it very cool this afternoon?"

Then she met his gaze, and, hating herself because her heart was throbbing so gladly at sight of him, and desiring herself because he had thrust her from head to foot—then, never knowing her fate was in it, she turned her beautiful face fearlessly away, and withdrew her hand, and answered him.

"No, I thought it was charmingly pleasant on Bessie's way."

And Mr. Ammidon recoiled as if he had been struck a dreadful blow, and could not, for the life of him, console himself with the conviction that women were fools, and men were well rid of them.

The next day he told Mrs. Benedict he would

not visit his room any longer; and had his trunks packed and sent to the Grand Central Hotel.

Mr. Ammidon determined to kill two birds with one stone—to get out of the possibility of having to meet often Mrs. Benedict's friend, the pretty, merciful little woman, than whom he had never loved another, and to make his home where house-cleaning was unknown. (No disrespect intended to the Grand Central.) And Bessie cried till her eyes were red and swollen, to think how entirely indifferent Mr. Ammidon was to her; and the winter crept softly along in soft, white, snowy robes, and several times Mrs. Baldwin saw Mr. Ammidon driving past in a gorgeous little cutter, behind a fast horse, whose string of silver bells made such sweet music to her ears, although he didn't do more, as he passed, than glance carelessly at the window and bow.

And the sweet, warm spring days came—and with perfumy hints of roses and woodbine, and fresh, emerald leaves, and climbing vines, and bursting blossoms, came Bessie Baldwin's fate, in the shape of the unromantic, the inevitable spring cleaning, that must be undertaken and accomplished, no matter how temptingly balmy sunshine and fragrant breezes and cloudless skies clamor for promenades and drives in order to welcome them.

It thus happened that while the delicious May was crowning even New York with radiant glory of days of sunshine and warm, fresh breezes, that Mrs. Baldwin was ensconced in one of her attic chambers, with a blue veil tied tightly over her golden hair, and her muslin dressing gown up to her ears, and her lovely face despite the half-worn boots; with a big basket lying in readiness beside her, and her faithful ally, Annie, waiting to consign piles of waste to deathly ignominy—and the paper and rag-man.

Only one pile more, Annie, and aren't you glad we're so nearly done! Here, you sort the papers, and I'll see that nothing worth saving has been put with this music."

And a minute after the soft, rustling stillness was broken by a sudden exclamation from Mrs. Baldwin, and Annie looked up, wide-eyed, to see her reading a penciled note, with paling face and trembling mouth.

"It's a letter—I lost—that's all, Annie. Go on with the papers; there is the man at the door about removing the stoves. I'll go down. You can finish."

And with fluttering heart, and eyes that were suspiciously bright, Mrs. Bessie went downstairs to let in the "stove man," and glad of an opportunity to get away by herself a few minutes to think it all over, to try to realize that it was true that Walter Ammidon had loved her.

And she brushed away tears that were both rapturous and full of disappointment and fear, and opened the front door, not to the stove man, but to Walter Ammidon.

He bowed with a little look of surprise and chagrin, fearful lest, now that his love for Bessie Baldwin had overleaped its boundaries, and forced him to a second attempt to win her love—that had become more precious in proportion as it had become more unobtainable—fearful lest his coming, as suggested by her appearance, was inopportune and awkward.

But Mrs. Baldwin flushed, and smiled, and looked lovely, despite the old blue veil; and then he suddenly discovered she held in her hand the note he had written her six months ago!

She answered his inquiring look as she conducted him into the cool, dusk parlor.

"I have only this moment read your letter. Oh, Mr. Ammidon, what must you have thought of me, all this time?"

His face lighted gloriously.

"That you were the sweetest little darling in all the world, whom I loved so, and wanted so, that I came again to-day to plead my cause. Bessie, consider that letter written just now—what would be the answer?"

And she dropped her white eyelids, and half-averted her sweet, blushing face, and the answer came through her parted lips, so low that only a lover's ear would have known she said "yes."

And Mr. Ammidon never finds fault when his wife "cleans house," because he knows if it had not been for that abused institution, he might yet be a lonely boarder in Mrs. Benedict's house.

"Little Jess."

BY JOS. E. BADGER, JR.

"STRANGER, what was ye born an' brung up?" he uttered, slowly, holding the glass of beaded liquor poised in mid-air, with half-contemptuous, surprise written upon every feature. "Never heard tell o' Little Jess, the king-pin o' Celestial City! Waal—waa, the ignorance o' some critters is 'prishin'!"

"That's as now, I was even more ready to listen to a good story. A matter of business had caused me to 'lay over' one day at Abilene, Kansas, and while in one of the saloons, where a number of drovers and 'bullwhacker' were conversing, my curiosity was excited and I ventured a question, to which I received the 'Yankee answer' recorded above. But this was not my first interview with the 'cow-boys,' and when a supply of tobacco and 'pizen' had atoned for my ignorance, I was rewarded by hearing the following tragic episode in a wild, misguided life:

"He was the biggest little man I ever knowed, was Jess. Pure grit, b'iled down to double proof, he was. An' fight! they wasn't no way he wouldn't fight, stranger. An' when he got on a jamboree, it was just scratch gravel an' rucka-jamboe for the fresh ontel he kem to his sober self ag'in. I reckon they was a good mule load o' lead swung away at him afore the boys found out the little cuss was bullet proof. They do say he done sold himself to the devil, an' nothin' couldn't hurt him afore his time was out; I can't say jestly, how that was, but this much I'm bettin' on, unless they're powerful strong-handed down there, Little Jess is a runnin' the deal to suit his own hand—noyer you hear he talk!"

"He had one soft pint, he'd Jess; an' that was wimmen. Not in the way you might be thinkin', stranger. Though we could show up more gay an' glorious female critters than any two camps that side o' Frisco, they wasn't nary one on 'em all could take the stiffenin' out o' Little Jess; an' I reckon they was six out o' every ha'f dozen on 'em as tried that level best fer to corral his fections. No, he was like frozen water on that pint. An' yit two out o' every three o' his fections was on that 'c'count. Ef a cuss spoke crossways about any 'em—no matter if she war old as the hills an' uglier 'n a horn-toad, jest so sure they was somebody goin' to get licked, er mebbe putt in fix fer a berryin', 'cordin' to the way things turned out."

"That was Infamy Jane, forty year old, I reckon, an' so ugly a look at her'd frighten a blind monkey into fits. The small-pox'd et off her nose an' one eye, an' left her balder 'n a billiard ball. She had Injun blood in her too, I reckon. She was cookin' her four young fellers from Indintry, a mile or so out o' town, on their claim, an' one mornin' they was found dead—'pizened'—an' she a-watchin' 'over 'em. We couldn't git nothin' out o' her—nary word. Doc. Mishler he 'vestigated the matter, an' foun' every bit o' cooked grub in the shanty was chuck full o' pizen."

"Waal, bein' she was a woman critter, it was settled she should hev a fair trial, though I don't reckon they was one feller in camp as didn't know she'd 'pizened' the boys. They putt me on the jury—'I licked Soapy Sam, which was the constable, fer doin' it the next week."

"The show was run fa'r, that I must say; an' Jack Hayes—he war sheriff then—come down a-puppies. Jay-bird Charley was the persecutin' turner, I think they called him. Poker Dan was putt up to talk for the prisoner, but he war so blind drunk it took two men to hold him up ontel somebody rolled in a bar'l with the head knocked out, when the boys sot Dan inside, right end up, an' the trial went on."

"I don't reckon you kear to hear the hull thing. Jay-bird Charley war puttin' on the last felches, when in comes Little Jess. That war white line round his lips, an' his black eyebrows was drawed up like moon beams. When I sawn that, I got ready to dodge, fer I knowed that they was goin' to be some circus right thar."

"The persecutin' turner he didn't 'pear to notice, but went on, harder 'n ever, makin' the prisoner out to be wuss then the devil hisself. Then Little Jess spoke right out in meetin'."

"Any man that kin talk so about a woman, even ef she was the greatest saint in ever trod the footstool, is a burnin' disgrace to the mother as bore him! She is a woman, boys, he said, lookin' at us jury fellers. 'She's old an' crazy, too. Don't hev her blood on your han's. Let her go free, an' ef guilty, God'll punish her in His own good time. As for you—an' he turned to Jay-bird Charley once more—as for you, think of your own mother—"

"An' ef I do, broke in the turner, brashly, 'twon't be to blush fer her. Thank God, she is an honest woman, an' not like your mother an' sister!"

"That was the last word he ever spoke, fer he went down with a bullet clean through his head, dead as a cracked nut. I dodged under the bench; but they didn't come no more bullets as I 'pected. 'Sleed I hear Little Jess say?"

"Any o' you gentlemen at wants to come an' see me, I'll find me outside."

"Cap'n Jack Hayes riz up an' made a jump fer him, but somehow ketchin' his foot on the desk afore him an' pitched head fus: to the floor, knockin' out his brains; and they wasn't no one else fool enough to try to stop Little Jess."

"When Cap'n Jack come to, he made fer outdoors, follered by the crowd. The boys was brave enough, but they wanted a leader, when such a hard nut as Little Jess was to be bucked ag'in. He foun' him waitin', sure enough. Thar he was, on critter-back, full-heeled, an' lookin' jest pizen nasty, you bet. I reckon he knowed thar wouldn't be no foolin' when once Jack Hayes tuck the trail."

"Hill!" he yelled, as he dummed ef his voice didn't sound as loud an' full of music as a hull brass band. 'One more step, an' I'm into ye!'

"Cap'n Jack fired, but I reckon the tumble he got hed jumped his aim like, fer he missed, clean, though the bullet made the back of his head. That jumb saved Hayes, but Hog-eyed Jim ketchin' the bullet squar' in his throat, an' never knowed what hurt him. Then bullets flew mighty lively an' perminiks, I tell ye. The way Little Jess did work them shootin'-irons o' his'n was a wonder. 'Twas wuss then a bull-busted nest o' bal-hoets whar I was, an' ef I ever felt like huntin' eny hole, that was the time! Lucky it didn't last longer. Es it was, when Little Jess turned an' made fer the hills, thar was five dead men a-layin' thar, an' more on 'em as could show marks o' how they'd been shot."

"But it settled his case. We couldn't let him go now, to brag over cleanin' out the hull town; not much. It was break fer horses an' feller foot-oot. An' dummed ef I didn't see two big fellers a-straddle a old broken-legged cow, usin' thar tooth-picks fer spurs to make her travel."

"Thar was one p'int in our favor, es we foun' out soon's we struck his trail out o' town. His hoss had been hit and wounded with one o' our bullets. The blood-drops was thick along the trail, an' in ten minutes he'd be in sight. We spread out, to keep him from doublin', an' inside o' ha'f an hour, was fixed so that he couldn't bend out o' a straight line neither side without runnin' slap ag'in our pistols; an' straight ahead o' him, not two mile away, lay Devil's Kenyon, whar we felt sure he must come to a stan'."

"But we didn't know his hoss, hurt as it was. I reckon they both on 'em had a big chunk o' the old boy in 'em. Right up in the air that crippled hoss riz, crossed his legs like a bird, Little Jess a-laughin' like he was goin' to a weddin' all the time. The critter lit right enough, an' plunged on some fifty feet or more, then dropped dead. But afore any one o' us could git a bead on him Little Jess was kivered ahind the bushes, an' crackin' away like two shots that emptied two saddles quicker'n a wink. The rest on us sorter felt back. We wasn't hogs."

"Cap'n Jack soon fixed it. We was to creep up, under kinder. He was to lead a party 'round to a good crossin' in the distance, whar we could easly pick him off. I reckon he saw the game was played, fer he called out:

"You needn't go to that trouble, gentlemen. Promise you won't shoot, an' I'll give in."

"Waal, he kin close,